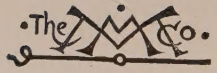
THE ISLE OF THE SHAMROCK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A Knitter on the Highway

THE ISLE OF THE SHAMROCK

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WRITTEN AND
ILLUSTRATED BY
CLIFTON JOHNSON

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Introductory Note

In one of his earlier volumes John Burroughs tells of a Frenchman who visited England with the intention of writing a book about that country. For a long period he continued to observe and collect material. During the first weeks his enthusiasm over his project was unbounded; a year passed and he still thought of writing a book, but was not so sure about it; and after a residence of ten years his doubts as to his ability of adequately handling the subject had so grown that he abandoned the scheme altogether. Mr. Burroughs's comment is that, "instead of furnishing an argument against writing out one's first impressions of a country, the experience of the Frenchman shows the importance of doing it at once. The sensations of the first day are what we want, — the first flush of the traveller's thought and feeling before his perceptions and sensibilities become cloyed or blunted, or before he in any way becomes a part of that which he would describe."

This defines very forcibly, I think, the source of whatever merit may have been attained by the present volume, or by its predecessors on England and France. The view is from the outside, and has both the faults and virtues of such a view. It is a record of first impressions and of the pleasure in things novel and unexpected which never comes but once. As such I finish it, trusting that I may have succeeded in conveying to others something of the charm and interest that these scenes and incidents had for me.

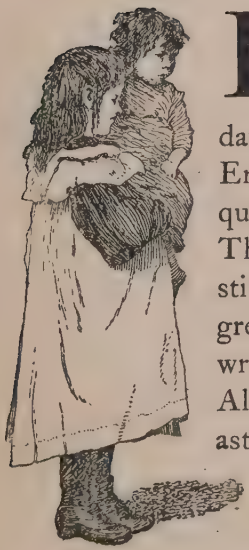
CLIFTON JOHNSON.

THE ISLE OF THE SHAMROCK

The Isle of the Shamrock

I

THE CASTLE OF ELOQUENCE



IT was the first gray of a May morning, and the coasting steamer on which I had taken passage the day before at Plymouth, in southern England, was sliding along up the quiet of the river Lee toward Cork. The air was chilly, and the night mists still lingered in the hollows of the green landscape and floated in filmy wraiths over the surface of the water. All the little steamer's passengers were astir and were watching the scene from the upper deck. The most interested spectators among us were a score of Irish boys from her Majesty's ship *Renown*, going home for a month's leave of absence after a two years' cruise in the West Indies. They wore loose, blue uniforms, and flat

caps with their ship's name on the bands, and they carried their belongings tied up in colored handkerchiefs or squares of calico. To them the low-lying shores between which our boat was moving were superlatively beautiful. They eagerly picked out familiar points as we passed them, and declared that altogether this was the finest sight they had seen in their lives. When we at length approached the dock, their impatience to land was such that as soon as we came within jumping distance they tossed their little bundles ashore and made flying leaps after them. The officers of the steamer declared the man-of-war lads were as bad as a menagerie of wild animals. Attempts to restrain them were wholly futile, and by the time the gang-plank was in position they had helter-skeltered off up the neighboring streets and alleys and were lost to view.

I followed more leisurely and prosaically, and, after breakfasting, looked about the town. That I was in Ireland was plain from the start, for the brogue and the peculiar piquancy of the faces were unmistakable. Then there were the women with shawls drawn over their heads, and the numerous beggars, and the barefoot newsboys selling green-tinted papers, and there was the omnipresent donkey-cart, and, scarcely less conspicuous, that other distinctively Irish vehicle, the jaunting-car, with the seats hung above the wheels.

Some of the natives were no better than walking scarecrows, so dilapidated was their attire; yet, as a whole, Cork is a city that shows evidence of a good deal of business prosperity. A rich farming region lies round about which reminds one of England. I saw something of this on a trip I made to Blarney Castle, eight miles distant, and would have seen more had I walked as I at first planned. But the day was too bright and warm for comfortable tramping, and I went instead by a convenient steam tram.

Blarney town is a small manufacturing place. The castle, however, is well outside the village, in surroundings wholly rural, and the way thither is by a footpath and across a slight wooden bridge, spanning a swift, clean little river. The old fortress stands on a low hill, whence it looks down on a broad field from amid a grove of trees. This field is used as a public pleasure-ground, and rustic seats engird the bases of its noble oaks and elms, and a number of framework swings have been erected in the opens.

The castle makes an imposing ruin, for the main structure has suffered little from the ravages of time except that the roof and the wooden floors have fallen. You can climb winding stairs and follow devious passages into vaulted chambers and chilly cells to your heart's content. All this is very romantic; but it is worth while remembering that, in spite of its historic

charm and its strong appeal to the imagination, the castle is a relic of an age of barbarism when the country was divided among many petty chiefs, each distrustful of the other, even when on terms of nominal friendship. These dwellings of the chieftains were built primarily for defence. They were dark, damp, and cold, and their thick-walled gloom must have been decidedly more prisonlike than homelike. Everything in their construction speaks of a time of universal insecurity, and the knightly chivalry attributed to the period is not nearly so characteristic as its wanton fighting, robbery, and cruelty. I could not help feeling therefore that Blarney was better as a peaceful ruin than it was in its proud completeness devoted to its original purposes.

The castle is many stories high, and in the topmost cornice is the far-famed Blarney Stone — that powerful talisman which you have only to kiss to be endowed with eloquence for life. But as the vertical measurement of the cornice is about six feet and its projection beyond the main wall fully three feet, and as the Stone is at the bottom of the cornice, the kissing is not as easily accomplished as might be. Formerly it was customary to lower the candidate for eloquence over the rampart, head foremost. A friend clung to either heel, but at such a dizzy height the proceeding smacked so seriously of danger that of late years the parapet

Picnickers

has been guarded against further attempts of the sort by a row of great spikes.

The Stone Eloquent at one time dropped out. It was, however, promptly restored, and is now fixed in place by two heavy iron rods that clasp it to the cornice. Were it not that the Blarney Stone comes opposite one of the frequent gaps which alternate with the out-thrust of the supporting stones of the cornice, it would be practically inaccessible. As things are, the only way to bestow the mystic kiss is to get down on your knees, double up like a jack-knife, and crane your neck across the yawning vacancy. I regarded the Stone with interest and wished I was more of an acrobat, or more courageous; but I was deterred by that lofty hole, which, though not much more than a foot broad and four long, was still plenty large enough to fall through, and I decided to get along without the eloquence.

The story of the Stone dates back to the middle of the fifteenth century, when Cormac MacCarthy the Strong, a descendant of the ancient kings of Munster, and builder of the fortress, chanced one day to save an old woman from drowning. In her gratitude the old woman offered Cormac a golden tongue which should have the power to influence men and women, friends and foes, as he willed. She told him to mount the keep and kiss a certain stone in the wall five feet below

the gallery running around the top. He followed her directions, and obtained all the fluent persuasiveness she had promised. The tale of this new accomplishment of Cormac's and its miraculous origin spread, and the Blarney Stone has been drawing pilgrims to itself ever since.

It is said that all the innumerable MacCarthys who swarm in the barony are more or less descended from Cormac the Strong, and that even the meanest day laborer of the name considers himself the rightful owner of the domain of Blarney. They have never become reconciled to the fact that it was confiscated by the government, though two centuries have passed since the authorities took it in charge and conveyed it by sale to other hands. Tradition declares that the treasures of the MacCarthy family are sunk under the waters of the Lake of Blarney, which sleeps in a hollow a quarter of a mile from the castle. The secret hiding-place is supposed to be known to only three MacCarthys in each generation, and the treasures will be recovered the day that one of the family enters into possession of the ancestral estate.

While I was on the highest walls of the castle a party of small girls came clambering up from below. They were laden with baskets and bundles, and were evidently on a picnic. I had first noticed them on the green before the castle, where my attention was attracted

to the group by a sharp explosion from one of their baskets. There was instant consternation, the basket was hastily opened, and a bottle of lemonade was revealed fizzing itself to waste. To stop the foaming overflow of the precious fluid they drank it, and thus to some degree restored their equanimity.

When the party had finished the ascent of the winding, irregular flights of stone stairs to the top of the great castle walls, they at once approached me and asked where the Blarney Stone was. I pointed it out, and, one by one, they crept up and hung on to the parapet while they took a scared, distant look, appalled by the Stone's uncanny position, so far above the earth and separated from them by that abysmal gap.

"Mother of God, and is that it!" exclaimed the oldest girl; and then the smallest of the squad, a child of four in a white sunbonnet, began to cry.

This overtaxed the emotions of the others, and threw them into a panic, and off they went with ejaculations and chatter enough for a hundred. But when they reached the stairway they paused and looked down into the vacancy where the roof and wooden floors had fallen and long ago mouldered away and entirely disappeared. Awed by the vast emptiness of the space before them, one of the girls turned to me with the inquiry, "And where is the castle, sir?"

"It is right here," I responded.

"Sure, then," said she, quickly, "this is no castle, sir — this is just a hole with some walls around it."

Soon after this ingenuous company of picnickers had gone, I descended also, and overtook them in a path under the castle walls. They had been brought to a stop by another mishap to their provisions. A basket cover had come off, and the bread and butter and cakes had gone flying all over the premises. Every soul took part in an excited scramble to the rescue, and I arrived just as the last of the food was being gathered up and crammed back into the basket. There were no lamentations. Apparently it never occurred to them that any harm had been done.

They had seen all they wished to of the castle, though they declared they liked it very well except for "thim horrid stairs," and the Blarney Stone, which they "didn't think nothing at all of." Now they were betaking themselves to the green, where they piled into the swings, and all talked together all the time.

I sat down near by, and was treated like an old acquaintance. Where was I from? they asked — "America? Lord save us!" ejaculated the oldest of the party, "and do you know Katie Donovan, sir? She is me cousin, and she is in America, sir."

They were much disappointed that I did not know Katie Donovan. At their request I pushed them in

the swings for a few minutes. They were very appreciative. "It is fine—it is exquisite, sir!" they said.

So grateful were they that they let loose one of their bottles of lemonade into a glass for me, and they brought me a plum cake and a knife to cut it, and requested me to take as much as I liked. They also brought me some sweet biscuits and candies. In their generosity they would even take the candies out of their mouths and offer them to me. Finally they gave me an orange. I was afraid they were robbing themselves, and tried to refuse, but they insisted with the affirmation that they had more than they could eat, and if I didn't take it, they would have to throw it away, so they would!

Mamie, the youngest, could dance, they said. "Her sister sings the tune, and she dances—indeed she do!"

Then Mamie was wheedled and her sister sang the tune, and the tot shuffled her feet and bobbed up and down. What a happy-go-lucky lot they were, and they were to stay all day and not return to Cork until seven in the evening!

When I bade the little Corkers good-by they wanted to know was I going to America now?

"No," I replied, "I shall go to Killarney first."

"And who is that, sir?" asked one of the smaller girls. "I don't know him, sir!"

I parted from them with real regret. What lively tongues, what quick imaginations, what racy wildness! They had no need to kiss the Blarney Stone.

II

A MEDIEVAL BROTHERHOOD

ONE of my fellow-travellers on my return journey by the steam tramway to Cork was a stout, red-faced Catholic priest whose breath was odorous of whiskey. He got out his prayer-book as soon as he had seated himself, made the sign of the cross, and began to read. I presently spoke to him, though with diffidence, and doubtful of the propriety of interrupting his spiritual — or was it spirituous? — meditations. But he turned to me affably, put his thumb into his prayer-book, and entered on an extended conversation.

It appeared that his special hobby was the Irish language, than which he declared there was no finer in

existence. Did I speak it? No? Ah! that was a pity, but I could learn it and I ought to begin at once! His hopes of making me a proselyte apparently ran high, for at parting he gave me copies of two papers printed in his beloved Irish, and a soiled visiting card, accompanied by a cordial invitation to visit him in his country parish, where we could consider this linguistic topic more at leisure. There are many enthusiasts like him in Ireland, who are desirous of saving the language from extinction. But it is probably doomed, though strenuous efforts are being made to have it adopted as a regular course in the government schools. Barely a sixth of the population is now able to speak the ancient vernacular, and even this small fraction can use English, too, in all save very exceptional cases.

The thing which interested me most in my talk with the priest was his mention of the fact that, not fifty miles distant, on one of the lower ridges of the Knockmealldown Mountains, overlooking the valley of the Blackwater, dwelt a community of Irish monks. They have separated themselves from the world with all its turmoil and jealousies and follies, and on the quiet of this lonely mountain-top they spend their allotted days in prayer and in peaceful pastoral employment. The priest said that many well-to-do persons resorted to the monastery annually to spend a few days and

HANGING OUT THE CLOTHES

"be alone with their Creator," and he added that the monks had a school there which was not surpassed anywhere. His regard for the monks was unbounded, and, attracted by his ardent description of their virtues and their peculiar habits of life, I determined to make a pilgrimage to this community among those curiously named mountains.

I reached Cappoquin, the railroad station nearest the monastery, in the middle of a warm May afternoon. Mt. Melleray, the home of the monks, was three miles back among the hills; and to fortify myself for the walk thither I went into one of the little Cappoquin shops to invest in a few sweet-cakes for a lunch. The woman behind the counter had my purchase partly wrapped up when another woman from the rear of the shop called out, "Stop! I will get the gentleman some that are clean."

She took the place of the first woman in waiting on me, and her kindness moved me to increase my purchase to the extent of two pennies worth of chocolate.

"Ah, sir!" said she, regretfully, "my little boy has got at the chocolate and he has eaten it all — the gossoon! We cannct keep it, he eats that much of it. He would eat a box a day — he would, sir!"

But that I might not suffer in consequence of her boy's inroads on her stock in trade, she insisted on trotting off to a shop up-street, whence she soon

returned with my chocolate wrapped in half a sheet of an old letter.

From the village I went first across the fields by a footpath, then followed a narrow lane bordered much of the way by high banks and walls overgrown with furze full of yellow flower-clusters. Along the horizon, on ahead, loomed the blue, serrated ridges of the Knockmealldown Mountains, and presently, on one of their lesser, northern heights, I discerned the monastery. It consists of a good-sized group of substantial stone buildings with a slender-spired church in the midst. The quiet of the hamlet when I entered it savored of desertion, and I, recalling what I had heard of the strange opinions and life of its inhabitants, half fancied the place was bewitched, and was tempted to turn back. But the wide door of the main building stood open and I went in. One of the monks —"the brother porter" was his official title—greeted me pleasantly and was my guide in a leisurely ramble through the buildings, and my instructor as to the ways of the community. He was a gray, elderly man, in a coarse, black, hooded gown. About his waist he wore a leather girdle, and on his feet white stockings and rude, low shoes. All the other monks were dressed in the same general style, except that certain of them wore white gowns with black scapulas. These white-garbed monks were the elders, or, as

THE MONKS' BURIAL PLACE

they were called among themselves, the "fathers" of the order.

The institution in its origin dates back to 1833, when a group of Irish monks was expelled for political reasons from the Cistercian monastery at Mt. Melleray in France. They returned penniless to their native country, and a nobleman living in the valley of the Blackwater took pity on them and gave them a tract of wild land here among the hills. They at once set to work with their own hands to reclaim it. For many years the community was so poverty-stricken that it had a hard struggle for existence, but in time it grew prosperous and independent. The land, as the monks found it, was a barren heath full of stones. They laboriously dug out the stones, carted them off to be used on the roads or for building purposes, and made the ground productive by subsoiling.

The task of reclaiming still goes on, and I saw one of the fields where the monks had been at work not long since. They had brought the stones to the surface in such quantities that the earth was hidden by them, and the field looked like a dumping-place of refuse from a quarry. It seemed impossible that such a field could be of any use for agriculture. Certainly, if the monks placed any value on their time, the labor involved must far exceed in cost the worth of the land when the process is completed. But I suppose they

rejoice in difficulties to overcome, and the hardship brings heaven nearer.

About seventy members at present make up the Mt. Melleray brotherhood. It is not often there are so few, but the monastery has been depopulated by a recent exodus to establish a new colony. Several branches own this for their parent community, including one in the United States, at Dubuque, Iowa.

The Cistercians were a very powerful order during the Middle Ages, and in the thirteenth century they had nearly two thousand abbeys in the various countries of Europe. Among those in Britain were Tintern, Furness, and Melrose, familiar to tourists now as beautiful ruins. Prosperity proved fatal, for as the brotherhood waxed rich the monks became indolent and deteriorated morally, and the result was that the order speedily decayed and waned until only remnants were left.

These Irish monks, with their stony land to subdue, and with the memory of their former poverty and struggle for existence still fresh, seem to be trying to realize the order's original simplicity. The main tenets of the religion, as exemplified by them, are a hermit-like separation from the rest of mankind, long-houred daily devotions, and strict habits of silence and humility. All personal wealth at the time of joining and all the products of the industry of individual

members are turned into the community coffers. Henceforth they work for the common good, and their thoughts dwell on things eternal, or are supposed to. They never speak save when it is absolutely necessary, and even then the ordinary members must first get the permission of one of the three superiors — the abbot, the prior, or the sub-prior. The usual method of communication is by signs, and words are only employed as a last resort. The only two members not bound by the rules of silence are the brother porter, who communicates with visitors, and the "procurator," or housekeeper, who is privileged to speak to any one when there is occasion.

The monks pay no attention to visitors. The weakness of the flesh may result in a sidelong glance or two; but, in theory, the world is naught to them, and so long as you do not actually interfere they go their appointed ways unconcerned whatever you may do.

Most members join the order between the ages of twenty and forty. Candidates beyond two score seldom meet with favor, because it is believed that a man is by then too old and fixed in his habits and ideas to learn the ways of the brotherhood. They accept no one rashly or in haste. To begin with, the applicant stays for three days at the monastery as a guest. If satisfied with what he sees and learns in these three

days, he becomes a "postulant" for three months, and his partial adoption is symbolized by a cloak which he wears over his ordinary worldly garments. After three months' experience, if he continues desirous to go on, he dons a special habit, more monkly than he has worn hitherto, and for two years is a "novice," sharing much of the community life, but not yet taking part in all the exercises. At the end of that interval the man who still yearns for complete monkhood takes "simple vows" and enters on a final probationary period of three years. This completed, provided the monks are satisfied with the novitiate's character, and are convinced of his sincerity, he may take solemn vows and enter on the full duties and joys of the order.

So far as possible the monks supply their own bodily needs—raise their own food, erect their own buildings, and do their own farmwork and housework, even to making bread and washing clothes. The last-named task is done by steam power, and is not as arduous an undertaking as it might be. The wash is hung out to dry on lines in a grassy area near the church. In one corner of this area is the monk's burying-ground, where are several high stone crosses commemorating deceased abbots, and numerous low iron crosses marking the resting-places of the humbler members of the brotherhood.

The monks make their own clothing and shoes, and they grow on their own sheep all the wool used in their garments. The only process consigned to outsiders in the transformation of the wool into clothing is the weaving. This is done in a neighboring mill, but the monks hope soon to run a loom on their own premises. Their greatest lack is skilled mechanics, and they are always glad to have such join their number.

They have a large garden where they raise vegetables and small fruits, and in the fields they grow potatoes, oats, turnips, and mangels. For stock they own, in addition to the sheep already mentioned, a herd of cows and a number of horses. They are not able to do all the work of the place unaided, and they keep constantly employed about forty laborers whom they pay from nine to twelve shillings a week. Half a century ago wages in the region were only a sixpence a day; but conditions have much improved since, and the peasantry are decidedly better fed, better clothed, and better housed.

Practically everything raised is consumed on the place, and for income they depend on chance sums donated to them, on summer lodgers, and on their school, which rarely numbers less than one hundred, and which stands in high repute among such of the Catholic gentry as desire an ecclesiastical education for their sons. Besides these aristocratic pupils the monks

teach the ragged, barefooted children of the mountain; but this is for charity, not gain.

A considerable amount comes to the brotherhood from pious persons, residing both near and far, who send ten shillings or a pound when a relative dies, with the request that the holy men of the monastery may say high mass for the repose of the lost one's soul. Another source of income is reforming drunkards. The unfortunates are received into the monastery, and the salutary effect of the seclusion and the religious surroundings, together with the fact that their liquor is taken from them gradually, works a cure — at least for the time being.

Two large buildings are reserved for guests, one for men and one for women, and in the summer the lodgers frequently number fifty or more. The few days or weeks spent at the monastery, with the accompanying confessions and sacraments, the quiet, and the simple wholesome living, bring genuine spiritual refreshment to the devout Catholic, and many persons come year after year. There are Protestant visitors, too, but these usually are impelled by curiosity, though even among them are certain ones who have no other motive than the desire to retire from the world for a season. The monks make no charge for their services, and when guests go they pay for their board whatever they choose, be it little or much.

A Schoolroom Corner

Two in the morning is the monks' time for rising, save on Sundays and holy days, when it is an hour earlier. As soon as they are up and dressed they file down from their dormitory to the church for matins. Religious exercises are held in the church at frequent intervals all day. Shortly after matins come lauds, at sunrise prime, at eight o'clock thirdst, at eleven sext, at two in the afternoon none, at five vespers, at eight compline, and then they retire. Not all can attend this whole list of eight services, for the monks are workers as well as prayers, and other duties keep some of them away from the church much of the day; but every one is present at the first three and the last.

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Following the religious exercises in the small hours of the morning the monks pray privately and read and meditate until it is time for the sunrise service. After prime they listen to a chapter from the Bible and to an exhortation from the superior. At about seven o'clock they assemble for a "collation." It seemed to me they must by then have sharp appetites, after being up since one or two in the morning. The dining room, like all the monks' apartments, is immaculately clean and substantial in all its appointments, yet at the same time is severely plain. It is a high, pillared room, appropriately dim, with a crucifix on the wall at the far end. On one side a lofty

pulpit, overhung by a sounding-board, rises well toward the ceiling, and around the borders of the apartment are lines of long, bare tables. When the monks have taken their places in the "refectory," with the abbot superior at the head of the table, they in unison say grace. Then they sit down on the benches along the walls and at a signal from the superior begin eating. The pulpit during the silent meals of the day is occupied by one of the monks, who reads to his brethren from Scriptures or from some approved religious work —a book of sermons or the lives of the saints. When the superior observes that all have finished eating, he signals again and the gowned company rises, says grace, and leaves the room.

The morning collation consists of milk and six ounces of bread, brown or white as is preferred. Those who choose have butter with their bread, and, instead of milk, a few of the members substitute tea, cocoa, or even wine. The noon meal is the chief repast of the day. The allowance then is a pound of bread and a pint of milk, and there are potatoes and other vegetables, and frequently soup or macaroni. Indeed, except that the monks eat no meat, save when they are sick, they are free to partake of whatever their garden produces and whatever they can buy that is inexpensive. At six in the evening supper is served, the principal items in its bill of fare being oatmeal and

a portion of bread saved from the dinner allowance. On occasion a relish is added in the shape of celery, rhubarb, or gooseberries from the garden, or perhaps some preserves that the monks themselves have put up. From September 14th to Easter, however, this evening collation is omitted, but as during this period they retire to rest at seven o'clock, I think the added hour of sleep may somewhat alleviate the inner vacancy.

Manual labor begins at half-past five in the morning, when certain of the monks go to the barn to feed the stock and milk the cows. All the brotherhood are fond of open-air exercise, and the teachers and the father abbot, as well as the others, try to get out for a time each day, even if for no more than a half-hour digging stones from the land that is being reclaimed. For the field work their skirts are not wholly convenient, and they usually take a reef in them, and with pins or strings fasten them up nearly to their knees.

After the noonday meal the monks go to their cells to spend twenty or thirty minutes in praying, reading, or sleeping. In warmer climates this interval would be taken for a siesta as a matter of course, but few of these Irish monks care to sleep in the middle of the day. Their cells, each containing a narrow couch, are in an upper story along the sides of a long, high hall. They are simply little doorless sections separated by

slight partitions. There is just standing-room in them, no chair or surplus furniture; and all are exactly alike, the father superior's being no better than those of the lesser members of the order.

For reading the monks have a library of twenty-two thousand volumes to draw from. It is largely a religious library, for they buy none of the current secular books. They, however, have all the classics and standard histories, poetry, and novels. They even admit infidel books that they may keep posted on the wiles of Satan, but such are kept under lock and key and are only read by special permission.

The monks rarely go outside the boundaries of their own estate. Trading transactions in neighboring towns are intrusted to their hired help, and they themselves travel only on ecclesiastical business and in obedience to orders. In short, the monks of Mt. Melleray are a community of religious recluses who are as unworldly as they well can be. I doubt if they take any newspapers or know anything about the movements of life outside their walls. But the brother porter was an exception. His connection with the world was kept up through his intercourse with visitors, and he took a lively interest in the affairs of the nations, and had many questions to ask.

Just how much the monastery helps its inmates toward godliness, I am uncertain. It is retired —

away from turmoil and many temptations; yet in what I saw of the monks it seemed to me they still had our common human nature with all its earthiness. Probably they, like the rest of us, fall far short of their ideals; for only the rarest natures, in monasteries or out of them, attain to anything approaching unsullied spirituality.

III

THE LAKES OF KILLARNEY

THE Lakes of Killarney—there is something melting and delicate about the phrase that draws one strangely. It has a melody that charms with a vague suggestion of gentle, dreamy landscapes, peaceful waters, and mild blue mountains.

I suppose when the imagination has dwelt long on the fascination of a place beforehand, there is bound to be a certain degree of disappointment in seeing the reality; but at Killarney the combination of lakes and streams, mountains and

varied foliage, is so fine that even in one's fancy it could hardly be more attractive. The lakes are three in number, each with a character and beauty of its own, and the only serious fault I had to find was that they were too much shut away from the public by the bordering estates of the gentry. One of these estates — that of a Mr. Herbert — had, at the time of my visit, recently come on the market, and was the subject of a good deal of newspaper comment, both in Britain and America. The items and the headlines not infrequently gave the impression that the lakes themselves were to be sold, and that this single estate held them all within its boundaries. The fear was expressed that the domain would pass into the hands of speculators, and be exploited as a vulgar commercial show place, or, worse still, that it would be purchased by some aristocrat who would exclude outsiders altogether. Efforts were made to have the government buy the estate and convert it into a public park; and when this project failed, the suggestion was offered that the Irish in America might unite in contributing the needful sum, and do themselves honor by turning the domain over to their homeland for a national pleasure-ground.

The estate is hardly as vital as would be inferred from much that was published; yet it includes nearly all of the middle lake and a considerable strip along

the east shore of the lower lake. I heard the laboring folk speak of Mr. Herbert as a good landlord and employer, and they all regretted his financial embarrassment, and looked forward to a change of proprietors with misgiving. Whenever they mentioned his having "gone broke," I noticed they added the information that he had an American wife whom he had married for her beauty, wholly reckless of the fact that she did not possess wealth. It seemed to be taken for granted that such a match on the part of a British subject of the upper classes was very unusual and unwise, and the dismal sequel was held to be a natural consequence.

The lakes lie in a basin between several mountain groups, and they convey an impression of permanence and of age coeval with that of the heights which overlook them. A native of the region, however, informed me there once were no Lakes of Killarney at all. Where they now are was just a low valley, and in the valley were farms and a town. Unluckily, one of the dwellers in the vale had a charmed well. Still, everything was all right if he kept it covered nights, and this he took great care to do. But late on a certain evening, after the owner of the well had gone to bed, a neighbor visited it, drew a bucketful, and went away without restoring the cover. The next morning a great river was pouring out of the well, and the farms

THE UPPER LAKE

and the town were fathoms deep under water. There they are to this day, and when conditions are favorable, the old-time houses of the vale can be clearly seen at the bottom of the lakes, and so can the charmed well. Into it runs one stream, and out of it runs another — at least, that was the story as it was told me.

My acquaintance with the lakes began with an extended walk along their eastern side. Killarney town, on their northern borders, was my starting point, and I continued to the opposite end of the group, ten miles southward. Around the large lower lake is a pleasant, alluvial country of gentle slopes, where the grass flourishes, and the trees grow spreading and stately. But of this I saw less than I could wish, for the ribbon of winding roadway which I followed was so hemmed in by the walls of the adjoining estates of the aristocracy, that I might almost as well have been in a tunnel. Not until the middle lake was half passed did I find freedom. Then the wayside walls dwindled and disappeared, and the road, instead of being crowded far back from the shore by the broad parks of the gentry, came down to the borders of the water.

The landscape, meanwhile, had undergone a change, and was wrinkled into little hills that constantly grew more rugged, and the shade trees gave way to wild forest growths that had an almost tropical luxuriance.

There were beeches, elms, and oaks clad in their spring greens, and there were pines and drooping larches. Ivy vines crept up the tall tree trunks, and the ground was hidden by a tangle of dark, glossy holly and arbutus. I doubt if any woodland rivalling this in rich and varied profusion exists in all Britain. The forest, however, is not extensive, and after a few miles the trees are less lofty and less exuberant, and I found little left of the woods in the vicinity of the upper lake save stunted and infrequent patches growing among the rude gray crags at the foot of the mountain ridges. Where there was soil here, it was mostly a barren heath or a peaty bogland; but in the rocky ravines were streams of crystal as refreshing as they were pellucid, and I could hear the pleasant sound of distant waterfalls. Best of all, the waste was wholly unfenced, and there was nothing to prevent my wandering through it at will, and getting all the changing views the region afforded. I enjoyed this thoroughly, and by the time I was ready to turn back I had concluded that the little upper lake, with its many islets and irregular shores and wild surroundings, was the most satisfying of the three.

On all the long road I had come there had been scarcely a village worthy the name, and even the cottages were infrequent. I saw few people, and the busiest scene was on a spongy peat moss where several

groups were getting out their year's supply of fuel. Four or five men composed each gang. One of them, using a spadelike cutter, dug out the long, soggy bricks of peat; another with a fork tossed them up on the turf as fast as cut; and the rest of the company, also armed with forks, spread the sods to dry.

Instead of returning as I came, I took a side way, and paid a shilling at a lodge gate for the privilege of following a devious road across several bridges and large islands through the Herbert estate. At length I was again on the main land and had before me the ruins of Muckross Abbey — a great ivy-grown church minus roof and windows, but otherwise practically complete. It had a fine situation on a hill, with the lake in sight not far away, and the peaks of the big mountains looming across the water. Close about was a burying-ground where rest the remains, if tradition is to be trusted, of many Irish kings and chiefs. The churchyard continues to be used as a place of interment, and white modern crosses are mingled with gray moss-grown slabs, many of the latter fallen and worn blank by the storms of the passing years. The usual place of burial now is on the south and east sides, for the north is regarded as the Devil's side, and on the west are buried only unbaptized children, soldiers, and strangers.

Within the abbey are many dim vaults and passages

and several great halls open to the sky, in which are graves and sombre tombs and headstones. One cloistered court contains a yew tree grown to maturity with branches reaching out so thickly over the upper walls that scarcely more light comes from above than if the room had a roof. Naturally a tree so strangely placed has its mystic attributes, and the saying is that whoever takes a twig from the venerable yew will die within a year.

A century ago a hermit by the name of John Drake lived in the abbey for the space of eleven years. By covering an open cell of one of the upper apartments with fragments of tombs and coffins he protected himself against the inclemencies of the weather and made himself a home. He acquired a wide reputation for piety and for a demeanor that combined solemnity and cheerfulness. Pilgrims were in the habit of coming from a considerable distance to do penance at Muckross Abbey, and they exhibited their devotion to the saint of the place by going around the building a certain number of times reciting prayers. The neighboring peasantry supplied the hermit with food, and everything was quite idyllic, until he was seen reeling intoxicated among the graves, and it was discovered that the holy man was given to solitary whiskey indulgences. In consequence the superstitious veneration of the Killarney folk and pilgrims diminished, and one night the hermit left for parts unknown.

Muckross Abbey

The final touch is given to the story by the relation that, some years later, a lady speaking with a foreign accent arrived at Muckross accompanied by two servants who knew no English whatever. She asked many questions about the hermit, passed some weeks in praying and weeping over his stony couch, and then, after distributing alms, went away never to return.

When I reached my hotel in Killarney town at the conclusion of the long day's tramping, I was weary enough to find it a very welcome haven. It was a humble establishment on one of the town byways; yet, in spite of certain drawbacks, there was something about it decidedly congenial and interesting. It was a good place to see life and to meet everyday people, and this went far toward palliating its shortcomings. Of these I will not make a list further than to say that my room was a mixture, very characteristic of Ireland, of attempts at tidiness and of what was pretty closely related to dowdyishness and dirt; and the kitchen, of which I had glimpses as I went in and out, appeared not to have been cleaned or put in order for a month; while the hotel parlor looked like an asylum for second-hand furniture.

I was sitting in this parlor one evening when my landlady requested me to vacate in favor of two men who wanted to talk over a marriage which they hoped to consummate between their children. Nearly all the

Irish marry young, and among the poorer class they do so quite improvidently, with no question as to how rude the new home must be, and how barren its furnishings, and how meagre the prospect of income. Those who have property, however, do not make matrimonial alliances without careful calculation. A hotel is very apt to be chosen as a convenient meeting-place for the parents, and there they discuss the matter of dowry at great length, and the marriage depends more on their amicable agreement than on the love of those most concerned. Indeed, the match is frequently made by the elders before the young people have settled it themselves. The respective fathers haggle over what they will give with all the adroitness at their command, each trying to make as good a bargain as he can. If they fail to agree, they may call in a mutual friend to arbitrate; but, more likely, when one or the other concludes his companion will not donate enough, he goes elsewhere to seek some parent more liberal, and the difference of a cow or a donkey or so often breaks off a match.

Most of the day following my walk to the upper lake I spent in rambling through the town. There were several streets of shops, but nearly all these shops were small and the majority of them looked cheap and slovenly. Shabby buildings were common, and on the by-lanes were frequent low cottages with thatched

roofs. The town forms part of the Kenmare estate, and about a century ago it was entirely rebuilt by the lord of the soil. He was careful to have garden space behind each house, but in the leases omitted to prohibit the use of this space for other purposes. The tenants, therefore, took advantage of their liberty, and the meagre bits of ground intended only for lawn or tillage were soon sublet and built over with hovels. Irish landlords everywhere have the greatest difficulty in preventing a mischievous subdivision of holdings. The tenantry persist in this practice even to the starving point, and, aided by dirt and shiftlessness, they quickly transform what is planned to be a model village into a rookery.

Killarney is a place of some five or six thousand inhabitants, yet in some ways it was as rustic as any farm hamlet. Cows, goats, and fowls of various sorts were familiar features of its streets, and went in and out the houses with surprising freedom. It was clear that the townsfolk lived on hardly less intimate terms with the farmyard creatures than did their brethren in the country. Once, as I passed a corner saloon, I saw a party of geese (not human ones) waddle in with an air of frequenters of the place which was emphasized by their crooked gait. They looked this way and that, and I thought cast thirsty glances at the array of bottles on the shelves, and then, no bartender

chancing to be present, began nosing about the sawdust-sprinkled floor.

The cows enlivened the town ways with their coming and going every morning and every evening. At this season of the year they spent most of their time in the fields, and after each milking they were driven back to their pasturage. Their owners had stalls for them near their dwellings, in which the creatures were kept in winter.

The costumes of the women of the laboring class added a good deal to the picturesqueness of the town. When near home they appeared on the street bareheaded, and on more extended errands they donned an old shawl. If the weather was chilly, they pulled the shawl about their faces and looked out on the world from its hooded seclusion. Women with bare feet were common, and even those who wore shoes did not always esteem it necessary to have on stockings.

One feature of Killarney that was particularly noticeable when I was there was the number of broken windows right through the town, both in dwellings and in shops. It gave the place a depressing air of poverty, decay, and drunkenness. In explanation of this wreckage I was informed that a county council election had recently taken place.

"Ah, we had hot work here, we did that!" was the comment.

A Town Byway

In most districts of Ireland the election had passed off peacefully enough; for nearly everywhere the national party was so dominant that no outside opposition existed, and the contest was between two home-rulers. Thus it was all in the family, and there were no very marked explosions of partisan ardor.

But at Killarney the rivals were a home-ruler and a unionist, and resort was had to methods of dealing with political heresy that in most places are now becoming a little old-fashioned. As a matter of course, the enthusiasm of the patriots on both sides was braced with drink, and the persuasiveness of ardent spirits was used freely on the doubtful ones to make clearer to them the way they should vote; but this was not all. On Easter Sunday the home-rulers gathered for a rally on the public square, where they had erected a platform. The speaking had begun and everything was moving smoothly when the unionists made a descent on the meeting, armed with eggs and a great number of little paper bags filled with flour. The invaders pelted right and left, aiming more especially at the orators and dignitaries on the platform. The air was full of yells, and blows mingled with the crack and spatter of the eggs, and the soft bursting of the flour bags.

The crowd got well smeared, to say nothing of the bruises of the hand-to-hand hostilities, and the meeting

was effectually broken up. To the home-rulers the mortification was the deeper because this was the last gathering of the campaign and they were robbed of the chance to retaliate. But the thing about the assault which grieved them most was that the eggs used on them were in part bought from their own leader's wife. She kept a poultry yard, and the evening before had unsuspiciously sold to the enemy all the eggs she had on hand — some eight or ten dozen.

During my stay in Killarney there was a funeral in one of the thatched cottages on a lane neighboring my hotel. I was not as close and personal a witness of it as I could wish, but it served to set my landlady talking, and I learned a good deal about Irish funeral customs. The body of the deceased, from the time of death until it leaves the house for burial, lies in state in the "best" room, which means the kitchen in the average home. It is wrapped in a shroud, face uncovered, on a table lightly sprinkled with salt. Flowers decorate the shroud if the body is that of a child — otherwise ribbons — black ribbons for a married person and white for unmarried.

Such tables and other articles of furniture as are not immediately required are piled up on the bed, and forms are brought from the nearest public house to help seat the numerous company certain to be at the wake. Two candles are kept burning on each side of

the departed one's head, and it is deemed imperative that these shall not be in common tin or iron candlesticks, but in the aristocratic brass ones of the olden time. Rather than do without brass candlesticks the bereaved family will search over half a township to borrow them.

The funeral expenses are usually heavy as compared with the people's means. Among other outgoes, a coffin must be bought, goods for the wake purchased, and food and drink provided for the mourners. The family spend freely if they have money; and where their poverty is so pronounced as to prevent adequate preparations, some neighbor is pretty sure to go about and take up a collection in their behalf.

The wake, which begins the night after the death, is in most instances resumed the night following, and may be continued three or even four nights before the funeral takes place, if the fortune of the deceased will permit, and if the temperature of the season will allow the burial to be deferred that long. The friends all come, for to stay away would be to slight the memory of the dead. The house is much crowded, and there are seats for only a small portion of those present. Formerly a wake was apt to degenerate into a carousal, no matter how well the melancholy proprieties were observed when it began. But now the common feeling is that for people to get drunk on such

an occasion "gives a bad look to things," and, besides, the priests threaten not to hold a service at the house if the mourners at the wake indulge in strong spirits. A sup of whiskey for those who want it is still, I believe, not lacking; yet it is imbibed sparingly, and, on the whole, the gathering is decorous and quiet. There may be some telling of stories, and joking in the back shed to while away the tedium of the slow hours, but it is never boisterous.

Prominent among the mourners are the old women of the neighborhood. Long pipes and snuff are provided for them, and they are given the most comfortable seats around the fireplace. There they sit and puff and solemnly meditate, and every time the snuff saucer is circulated they each take a pinch, and say in Irish, referring to the deceased, "May God be merciful to his (or her) soul!"

About midnight light refreshments are passed, ordinarily bread and butter with tea and wine, or porter. After this repast most of the company scatter to their homes; but some linger until daylight, and a few elderly women stay by the corpse, in relays, from the death until the funeral.

There is seldom any keening at the wakes now, save in out-of-the-way villages. Usually, the only lamentations are the words that the old women address spontaneously to the corpse. Suppose the deceased is a

young man, and an old woman comes in and stands looking down to view the remains. She says, "Wisha, sure, 'twas well! I knew your father, and 'twas he was the dacint man; and little I thought I'd see you lying there to-day; and sure 'twas yoursilf was the dacint boy! 'Tis well I remimber when I used to rock you in the cradle mesilf; and sure I expicted 'twas you who'd be at my wake instead of my comin' to lament over you!"

If it was an aged person who had died, the woman would say, "God be merciful to you, and God be with the ould times! Sure, 'tis many the long day we've had together! But, sure, God's will be done; we'll all have to go the same road some day!"

The old woman also addresses words of comfort to members of the family of the departed, as, for instance, these to a mother who has lost a little girl. "You mustn't be frettin' now, poor woman. 'Tis well for you to have the little angel gone to heaven before you. Look at the way I lost my poor little Johnny; and, sure, hadn't I to bear it; and wasn't he the strong b'y when he wint on me? What loss is yours, after all, compared with others I could name! Look at Mary Nolan, poor woman, and hadn't she to put up with the loss of the provider of the family? So you mustn't be frettin' now, agra! That little angel will be intercedin' for you in the next worruld!"

When there is keening an old woman sits rocking back and forth at the foot of the corpse, her face covered with her hands. "Och hone! why did you die?" she chants, and continues with dirgelike cadence, in a long lamentation that in part mourns the death, and in part exalts the virtues, of the departed. At frequent intervals in this monody she breaks out into a keen — a wail thrice repeated in which her companions join. Some old women become experts in the art of keening, and are called on to be chief mourners at all the wakes throughout their home region.

Fifty years ago the merits of a man who died were celebrated with much emphasis on his valor in the fights of the local clans, and it was recalled with pride how well he wielded the blackthorn in his day. Nearly every neighborhood had its "factions" then, each with a leader who was its champion fighter. Fortunately, the dispositions of the members of opposing factions were not so warlike that enemies fought indiscriminately wherever they met. It was mainly when the people got together in force at the fairs or the markets that there was trouble. They only needed to drink a bit and they wanted to try their strength on each other. If a row did not occur naturally, some man would take off his coat, trail it in the dust, and dare any one to step on the tail of it. This provocation never failed of its purpose, and you would hear the sudden, startling yells

ringing through the town calling together the partisans, and then there would be "a wild whirl of shillalahs, and God knows what!" Some of the combatants would have to be carried home, possibly maimed for life, or even to die. Feuds were handed down from generation to generation; yet fights seldom occurred without the participants first having their valor strengthened by whiskey, and tales are told of encounters on the seashore where the tide has come in and drowned those that have fallen in the fray too drunk to rise.

The shillalah was the only weapon considered entirely orthodox in these combats. It derives its name from a famous wood in County Wicklow, where the best oaks and blackthorns for its making are reputed to grow. The old-time peasantry were very careful in selecting a weapon, and also in its preparation after it was cut from hedge or woodland. The usual mode was to rub it over repeatedly with butter and place it up the chimney, where it was left for several months. Shapes varied, but the favorite style was that of a cane three or four feet long. Occasionally a man would arm himself with a shillalah having a length of eight or ten feet, known as a "wattle," or with what was called a "kippeen" — a short club that had a burly knot on the end. This last was the deadliest of the three, but could not be carried with the innocent appearance of a staff, as could the other two.

That the aggressive use of the shillalah is of the past is witnessed by the fact that at the wakes, instead of a pæan over a dead warrior, there is substituted the praise of a good father. "'Twas he who reared his children well," cries the keener, "the quite (quiet) poor man — sure, you wouldn't know whether he was there or not!" That is, he never made his presence a disturbing factor in his home.

Killarney has the name of being a place where the beggars, by reason of their numbers and their persistence, make a real pest of themselves. But while I was there I encountered only one genuine specimen of the genus. I suppose it was as yet too early in the tourist season for visitors to be numerous, and the beggars had not begun to ply their trade in earnest.

My beggar was a man accompanied by a little boy. I had started for a walk, and he overtook me, and remarked on the fineness of the weather, though it looked very threatening at the time, and then he kept on with me for a mile or more. His tongue wagged unceasingly, and he commented on what was to be seen along the way, on the condition of Ireland, of England, and of America, and wove into it all the tale of his own troubles, — how he was a shoemaker, but could find no work these two years, how he had been evicted, and how he had this little boy and four other children to provide

An Able-bodied Beggar

for, and would I be good enough to help them a bit to get some food, etc., etc.

After the beggar left me I went on along the lakes. The air darkened as I proceeded, and I could see that a storm was brewing among the mountain peaks. Presently there came a report of distant thunder, and a little girl whom I met at the moment made the sign of the cross and hurried on faster. I stopped and watched the clouds in doubt; but the storm seemed to be swinging off in another direction, and I walked on again, intending to climb one of the mountains and see the country from the heights.

At length I took a road that wound high up the slopes of the hills, and as I went on I discovered that the rain had swept over this portion of my route and the road grew constantly wetter and more muddy. I continued to ascend until, in passing along the borders of the last patch of woods, before the land gave way to the stony upper wastes of heather and furze, I saw a tall, tattered man on ahead. He had a staff in his hand, and a cloak thrown loosely over his shoulders. Near him lay two dead sheep. I thought he looked as if he was some Robin Hood of the forest, who very likely had slain the creatures and was going to bear them stealthily away, and for a moment I entertained the fancy that he might treat me as he had them. He was peering about in a curious manner that I could not

understand, but his mild greeting, as I drew near, reassured me. The dead sheep, he said, had been killed by the lightning, and he had just found them there. He showed me some scorched streaks on their bodies, and when I resumed my walk and left him, he still hovered around the spot, as before, considering what was to be done.

The road now faded into a dim, grassy trail, leading away across a boggy level to a steep slope that mounted high toward the craggy mountain summits. I was crossing this marshy stretch when another shower approached. Behind me the landscape was being fast enveloped in murky blue mist, and a sombre twilight had crept over all the earth. I had a waterproof cape with me, and was about to put it on, intending to sit down on some rock and let the fast-gathering storm sweep over me, when I saw a woman not far ahead, moving off to the right, with a great bag on her shoulders. A glance in that direction revealed several thatched cabins among some tiny fields on a low hillside.

Between me and this gray, earth-hugging little hamlet the ground was a watery, boulder-sprinkled bog, which looked like a vast plum pudding. Had the menacing blackness of the storm been less near and ominous, I would have made a detour. As it was, I took a bee-line across the marsh, keeping to the stones as much

as possible, and with the first onset of the rain I reached the borders of the village. In a stableyard adjoining a dwelling I found an old woman relieving her shoulders of a plethoric bag full of heather, — bedding for her cow or goats, I presume, — and I concluded she was the person I had seen a few minutes previous toiling over the bog. She readily granted me permission to go into the house out of the downpour, and I hastened to seek the welcome shelter.

When I stooped through the low doorway, the house interior looked perfectly black, save for a feeble gleam of red in the fireplace; but as my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, the surroundings gradually disclosed themselves. The room was open above to the smoke-blackened rafters. Light entered through one small window and the door. This door, after a fashion very common in Irish cabin architecture, was divided horizontally in halves, and while I was present only the lower half was closed. The floor, partly of hard-trodden earth and partly of cobbles, was very uneven, and nothing set level on it. There were two small tables, a dresser sparsely filled with dishes, three chairs, and in odd places about the floor was a varied assortment of black kettles, pots and pans, shoes and rubbish. A good-sized clock was fastened to the wall, and ticked with steady solemnity in the dusk.

The old woman had followed me in and given me a

chair, and had herself sat down by the fire. She was telling me how their clock had been up there on the wall where I saw it for twenty years, and what good company it was, when there came a clap of thunder.

"O God Almighty, save us!" she exclaimed, and made the sign of the cross, and then bowed forward and spread out her hands in supplication. The posture was awkward, perhaps, yet was eloquent of a childlike fear and faith. "God bless us and save us," she continued, "and save his honor (meaning me), and save the people, and all of us."

The intonations of the thunder were of frequent recurrence after this, for the space of half an hour, and at every clap the old woman crossed herself and prayed something as above, though often mumbling more which I could not catch. The storm reminded her of a story — she would like to know if I had heard it, and whether I thought it might be true or no.

"There was a man, and he was workin' in a field like, and it came on to thunder, and he put his head in a hole in the wall, and he said, 'God save what's out o' me.' But he ought to have prayed for the whole of him, for he no sooner said that, than the wall fell and took his head clean off. It was telled to me that this was a judgmint on the crathur, because it is not right to pray small, just for yoursilf. But you should pray

A Farmyard Pump

large — to save us all — pray big and open-hearted. But that may be only a story, sir."

The fire beside which the woman sat was made on the floor at the end of the room under the wide hood of a chimney that flared out from the wall about five feet above the blaze. A sooty kettle hung over the flames and simmered cheerfully. Now and then the woman reached down to a heap of dry brushwood by her side, took up a few twigs, broke them across her knee, and laid them on the coals. If the fire was low, she would stoop and brighten the embers by blowing. It would flare up then, and its light would shine out into the dusky room. Her supply of pine twigs she obtained from the woodland down below, where the villagers were allowed to gather what they needed. The household store of peat, their usual fuel, was gone. They cut it on the mountain a mile above, and when it was dry carried it down on their backs, a task in which both the men and the women shared. No one in the village owned a horse, and the only beasts of burden, aside from the human ones, were two donkeys. Even for them the task of bringing the "turf" down from the mountain was thought too severe, the path was so steep and rugged, and they were chiefly used "to take to town for some messages."

A good deal of smoke drifted out into the room, and the woman explained that the chimney was bad, "but

some days we haven't a bit of smoke, and other days we have a good dale. It's as the wind turns."

The woman had two sons and a daughter living with her, as she told me with a fervent "Thank God! And I had another son who wint to Australia, and for two years I heard from him regular, and he sint me money; but I have had no account since, and I suppose he is dead. God help it, sir! And I had a daughter, too, that wint to America, to Worcester it was, sir, and her name it was Mrs. John Dwyer; but I have had no account from her, aither, this long time, and I suppose she is dead, too, sir."

The family had a cow and a calf and nine or ten sheep. The sheep were grazing on the mountain at this season, but in the winter they were kept in the walled fields near the house. "We sells the wool," the woman said, "but it brings no price at all, now —it do not, sir."

Few pigs were owned in the hamlet, but fowls were plenty, as I realized when the woman stepped outside for a moment and left the half-door open. Almost at once a bedraggled rooster skulked in and stood with his head well down between his shoulders, and his tail drooping to let the water run off. He did not look very attractive, but a hen, which seemed to think his company desirable, came with a startling flutter and cackle from a nest in a room corner, lit near the rooster, and

began looking about the floor for something to eat. Then a bevy of geese came in from the wet outer world. The place was getting pretty populous, but the woman presently returned and shooed these two-legged friends all out into the yard with a "Begone, you thieves, you!"

The woman's sons were at work for one of the gentry in the valley, so the family was not dependent on the little farm, and they ate the eggs their hens laid, instead of selling them as they would have to do, "if they were badly off." They bought oaten meal, and occasionally fish and bacon, and they made a trifle of butter now and then for home use, and raised a few cabbages and enough potatoes, in a good season, to last through the year. As soon as the potatoes matured, they dug day by day what they needed for immediate eating, and just before the winter set in placed the residue in a pit to which they had access in renewing the household supply.

"If it is wet," explained the old woman, "or the blight do come too soon, the p'taties do not last, and thin we eats bread; and our crops do none of thim do well unless we have the sun — the foine time, sir!"

However, they fared much better than when she was a "gaffer" (a girl of ten or twelve). "Thin the times was tight, and we lived on p'taties altogither. Sometimes we ate thim with only salt, and sometimes

we ate thim with milk. We niver had bread ixcipt at Christmas, and very little mate at all."

Continuing her story of the local life, the old woman said that for the cattle they raised hay and oats, "and we might have plinty of provender, by the will of God, if it was not for the deer comin' here from the forest. There do be ony amount of thim crathurs back here on the mountains. They gets into the corn and spoils it on us. Every night now, when the stalks gets big, the deer come and do be atin' them so the corn will not be worth the cuttin'. They feeds on our grass, too, when it gets strang."

On Sunday all the mountain folk go to mass at Killarney, four miles distant. Winter or summer, it makes little difference. "All the people around go, sir, except it may be those who are too old or feeble."

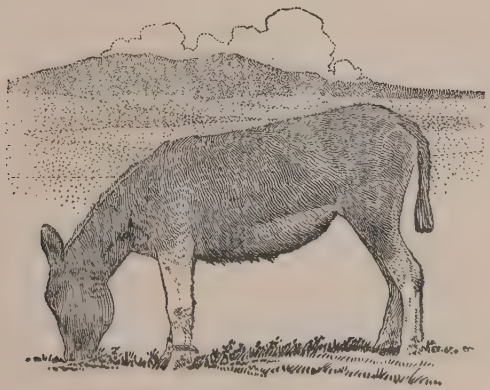
I mentioned the fact that Ireland had no snakes, and the woman said, "You have them in your country, I believe, sir, and I suppose they'd eat a person nearly, sir."

While we were talking the daughter of the house came in very wet with the rain, and the mother got up and had her sit by the fire. A great long-legged dog had entered with the daughter, and after shaking himself vigorously, and sending the water-drops flying all around the room, he, too, drew near to the fire, and his damp fur was soon steaming in the heat.

As I was leaving, the old woman said, "You are an Irishman, sir, I suppose?"

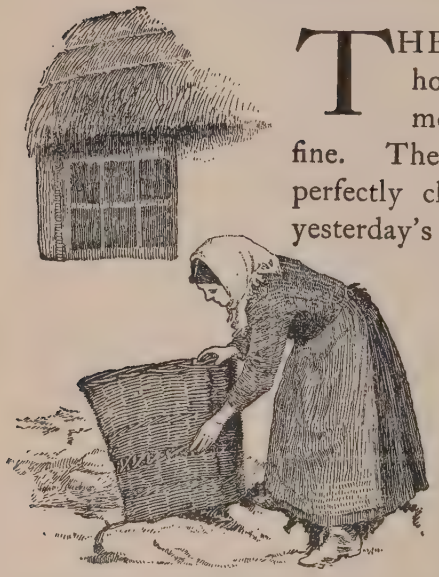
My negative seemed to surprise the two women greatly, for they said one to the other, "God help us, but he looks like an Irishman, does he not, now?"

When I stepped outside I found the water still dripping from the eaves of the thatch, but the storm was over, and by the time I was well started on my way toward the valley the sun came out. It silvered the green-isleted lakes far down below, and even brought a faint gleam of brightness to the watery heights of dun-colored heather; and as the clouds dissolved, and the gauzy mists drifted away from the blue mountain peaks, I saw that their loftier summits were whitened with a film of snow.



IV

A MOUNTAIN CLIMB



THE weather in the early hours of the following morning was unusually fine. The blue of the sky was perfectly clear and placid, and yesterday's storm was only a reminiscence. It had swept over Killarney town with great severity, and hailstones had fallen which the natives said were "as big as small p'taties." But it was the thunder rather than the hailstones that had especially aroused the anxiety of the townfolk, and their alarm was of much the same type as that I had witnessed in the hut on the mountain. They did more praying in the short duration of this one storm than they would have done in

six months of fair weather, and with every crash from the heavens the sins of the whole community were repented of afresh.

In the schools the approach of the storm was heralded by a general desire to scud for home, where the children had the feeling they would be safer, but the teachers refused permission. From the first rumble of thunder to the last the scholars were so frightened that studying was out of the question, and they could only tremble and protect themselves from impending destruction by continual crossings. When the storm passed the praying ceased, and I suppose no more wholesale repenting was done until there was another thunderstorm.

My purpose to scale one of the Killarney mountains had been foiled on the previous day, but now the clear sunshine and a fresh breeze encouraged me to try again. I had no very roseate fancy for the task — a gentler sort of exercise would have been more to my liking; yet I could not help feeling the attraction of those purple heights that serrated the whole southern sky-line. I decided I must at least have a single experience of the pleasures and possible hardships of an ascent, and I chose for my objective, Mt. Mangerton, twenty-eight hundred feet high, an altitude slightly exceeded by a rival peak across the lakes, but not attained by any other mountain in all Ireland.

The route to Mangerton passed near the village

where I had been during the storm of the day before, immediately beyond which, climbing began in earnest. The land upheaved in a big heathery slope strewn with boulders and dotted with clumps of furze. I kept to a faint path that followed a dry watercourse choked with stones and bordered on either side with a narrow ribbon of green turf. In places the trail was so uncertain that I would lose it and get off among the hummocks of the bog, where the heather and the spongy mosses intermitted with cracks and chasms of black mud. Some of these oozy crevasses I leaped, some I went around. At a distance the bog looked innocent enough, and I would not have imagined that walking on it could have been so toilsome and confusing. It was always a relief to get back to the firm track along the stony ravine.

A few goats and sheep were feeding on the mountain-side, but I saw no human life — not even a shepherd boy. The way continued steep and difficult, and the steady upward climb was hot and exhausting. It would have been worse still had not gathering clouds occasionally obscured the sun. I paused often to rest and look back on the dwindled world below. There lay the lakes, with their irregular outlines and their numerous islets, and there spread the dusky undulations of the land through which crept the shining, sinuous streams, and over which drifted a vast patch-

work of sunlight and cloud-shadows, evanescent and vague as a dream.

At last the path brought me to a small lough lying in a great, high-cliffed pocket of the mountain-top — a sombre, lonely little tarn known as the Devil's Punch Bowl. In spite of its name, I ventured to drink from it, and found the water very pure and cold. But back in the days when the O'Donoghues were the acknowledged rulers of the Killarney country this highland pool was not so innocent. The story is that a certain chieftain of the clan was on familiar terms with his Satanic Majesty, and in the latter's honor one time filled the lake with whiskey. Hence the name. Besides being icy cold, the water contains no fish, and is said to be always in a state of agitation. The English statesman, Fox, swam around its twenty-eight acres in 1772, and the natives still talk of the exploit.

The Punch Bowl is twenty-two hundred feet above the level of the sea, and my goal, the summit of Mangerton, was somewhat over half a thousand feet higher. I soon resumed climbing, and the view broadened as I went on, until I could see all the great company of mountains round about. The heavy-based blue peaks rose on every side in vaporous mystery, a conclave of giants; and it seemed to me there could hardly be finer mountains anywhere in the world.

Shortly after leaving the Punch Bowl, the path

entirely disappeared, and only trackless bog lay before me. But it was not uneven and broken, like the bogs lower down. Heavily saturated surface vegetation overspread it, and the water spirted from beneath my shoes at every step, almost as if I had been wading through a shallow pond. I was rejoiced to find a momentary escape from this watery waste at the very summit of the mountain in the shape of a low cairn of stones. Thence I looked about me more particularly. The situation, just there, was not very impressive, for Mangerton has a rounded top, and I was in the midst of a wide plain of weak grasses, moss, and stunted heather. Save for a few skylarks soaring and singing, the mountain-top was wholly abandoned and silent, and I had no desire to linger.

By the time I had descended to the Punch Bowl, a shower came drooping across the sober moorlands, and I crouched under some projecting rocks and waited for it to pass. Afterward I sought out the mountain-path by which I had come up and continued down its now moist declivity until I reached the level of the tiny hamlet off beyond the marsh. It was after two o'clock, and I had eaten nothing since breakfast, with the exception of a few cakes I had carried along in my pocket. On the chance of getting a glass of milk in the village, I crossed the marsh and went up one of the hamlet's rough, narrow lanes. The place proved

to be well-nigh deserted, but the desertion was temporary, not permanent. It was a "Holy Day" — Corpus Christi — and nearly every one had gone off to town to attend mass and to trade at the shops. Only a few women and old men were left behind; for the day, as spent in the town, meant a peculiarly satisfactory combination of religion, business, and pleasure, and no one was willingly a stay-at-home.

I walked to the farther side of the village and back, and saw all of its seven houses. Their surroundings were very unkempt and filthy. The stable yards, with their muck and mire, were right before the house-doors, and the chickens and other farmyard creatures wandered about as they chose, and were nearly as well acquainted with the family kitchens as were the human inmates. On the hillside about the houses were many little fields that looked to be under very thorough tillage, some of them green with grass or oats, while others, which had recently been dug over, were as yet brown earth. Heavy stone walls crisscrossed the slope in a small-meshed network, which, nevertheless, failed to absorb all the stones the soil yielded, and there were frequent great piles in the midst of the fields.

One old man, who closely resembled a travelling ragbag, greeted me from a doorway, and went on to say that he was eighty-eight years old, and almost

blind. He had been a boatman on the lakes when he was younger, and at the time Queen Victoria was at Killarney, in 1861, he had been one of her rowers. This was the single great event of his life, and he dwelt on it fondly. The recollection of it seemed to bring to mind his personal appearance, and to awake the feeling that his clothes were not all they should be, in consideration of the dignity conferred by this long-ago honor. Nothing would do but he must go in and tidy up. After a considerable interval he reappeared, wearing a black dress-coat much too small for him. Indeed, it was not wholly on, but stuck half way; and it so constrained his arms that he could do little to better adjust the garment himself, and had to ask me for assistance. When he finally succeeded in pinching the coat about him, he resumed, with added satisfaction, the story of his life. But it soon came to an end. Aside from that luminous period of the queen's visit, when he was among those chosen to be her rowers, the only feature of his experience that had made deep impress was the increasing blindness of these sombre latter years.

I called again at the cottage where I had been during the thunderstorm the day before. The daughter was at home, but the old mother had gone to mass early in the morning, and would not return until evening. I asked if I could get a glass of milk, and

the woman filled a teacup from a large earthen bowl that had been on a shelf in a dark corner. When she handed it to me she apologized for any smoky taste the milk might have, and in all she did and said my hostess was thoroughly considerate and kindly. She was no longer young, and she was homely, and worn with rude labor almost to ugliness; but she could not have treated me with more genuine politeness had she been a lady in a mansion.

It was she who did most of the work about the place, for her brothers were day laborers in the valley, and her mother was getting old. "Ah, no," she said, "mother cannot worruk long together now. She likes best to light her pipe and tramp off to Killarney to mass, or to sit on a bank in the fields and smoke there, and often she do lay down her pipe on the bank and forget it."

I spoke of Queen Victoria's rower, and the woman said: "That was Daniel Hurley. He was a good rower when he was young and strang, but he's nearly dark, now, the poor man!"

Life must be very sober-hued, I thought, in the forlorn little hamlet; but it has its bright spots, notwithstanding. One of these is dancing, a favorite recreation throughout Ireland. With the approach of summer, in nearly every well-settled region the young men join in contributing enough money to put up a dancing

platform at some central place. There they have their jigs each pleasant evening, until the chill days of the late autumn put an end to these open-air festivities. Then the scene of them is transferred indoors, and they come at longer intervals; but in some convenient farmhouse a dancing party is pretty sure to gather on Sunday evening, if on no other evening of the week, the winter through. In case of a grand, all-night ball, a half-barrel of porter is provided to keep up the enthusiasm, which otherwise would tend to flag in the small hours of the morning.

A place like the remote little mountain village I was visiting had to forego the pleasure of the summer dances. The community was too small, and the work of the day too heavy and prolonged. Winter brought comparative leisure, and the able-bodied folk of the hamlet could not only attend the dances in the home village, but those that occurred for miles around. On the mountain, where the houses are all small, room was secured for the merrymaking by moving out most of the furniture. The music, on ordinary occasions, was supplied by some of the local youths who played the concertina, but in a really tony affair a fiddler, or perhaps a piper, was hired.

There was a curious lack of animation in the woman's voice and manner as she told me about these rural balls. I suppose for her the days of sweethearts were past, and

that she no longer joined in the dancing, but sat among the old folks, looking on.

When I prepared to go on down the mountain, I offered a piece of silver for the milk I had drank. That was a mistake. It hurt the woman's feelings. The welcome accorded me had not been for money, but was an unselfish expression of hospitality. What was true in this upland home was true of the Kerry peasantry generally — they like to have a stranger come into their houses and sit and chat, and perhaps have a bit to eat and drink with them. To offer pay is to destroy the comradeship which they value above profit. This open-hearted friendliness was a surprise to me, and wherever I met with it, there was awakened not only respect and warm regard for my entertainers, but, to some degree, for all Ireland.

In recalling what I saw of the tillage about these mountain huts at Killarney, I am impressed with the predominance of the potato plots; and it was the same in the poor little bogland villages everywhere I travelled. As a matter of history, potatoes have been the mainstay of Ireland for more than two hundred years. The question is still disputed whether they have proved a boon, or a sustainer of poverty and wretchedness. A very limited portion of land, a few days of labor, and a small amount of manure will create a stock on which a family can exist for twelve

months. But the dependence on a single crop is disastrous when that crop fails, as it naturally must, from time to time, so that on the whole it is to be regretted that the potato has won such an exclusive place for itself.

The potato was first made known to Ireland by Sir Walter Raleigh, who owned an estate on the south coast. It won its way slowly, and both in Britain and on the continent was for some time cultivated only in gardens, and even there as a curiosity rather than as an article of food. Presently it was imagined that it might be used with advantage for feeding "swine or other cattle," and by and by that it might be eaten by poor people, and thus serve to prevent famine when the grain crops failed. Ireland led all European countries in the adoption of the potato by many years; and it was from there it was introduced into Lancashire, about the end of the seventeenth century, whence it spread over England.

Erin's most distressing experience with this staple was in the famine years of 1846 and 1847. I am acquainted with no more graphic description of that period — the darkest through which the island has passed in centuries — than is contained in the pages of "Realities of Irish Life," by W. Steuart Trench. His story is well worth retelling. Mr. Trench resided at Cardtown, in Queen's County, where he had become much interested in reclaiming an extensive tract of

mountain land, chiefly of rough pasture covered with heather. He kept no less than two hundred laborers constantly employed in this enterprise at good wages, and the upland glen where his mountain property was located, with a clear trout brook flowing through it to enhance its attraction, had come to be known as "The Happy Valley."

He accomplished the reclaiming mostly by means of the potato, the only green crop which would flourish on such ground. Guano had at that time recently been brought into use as a manure, and he found it was particularly suited to the potato. This and lime he applied liberally. The land was ploughed into "lazy beds"—ridges about five feet in width, alternating with furrows. The potatoes were planted on the ridges by merely sticking the spade into the rough earth and dropping in the seed back of the tool, where it remained two or three inches beneath the surface, when the spade was withdrawn. The potatoes thus treated developed to perfection, and the harvest well repaid all labor and expense. Meanwhile the heather rotted under the influence of the lime, and was transformed with other abundant vegetable matter which the soil contained into a valuable fertilizer. Finally, in digging the crop, the ground was thoroughly turned and stirred. As it was now both mellow and greatly enriched, it was in excellent order for sowing

grass or grain, and was permanently worth twenty times its former value.

The expense of reclamation was practically defrayed by the sale of the first year's crop alone; and encouraged by success attained in previous seasons, Mr. Trench, in 1846, planted to potatoes more than one hundred and fifty acres. Everything went well during the early summer, and in July the extent and luxuriance of his upland potato fields were the wonder of every one who saw them. He felt certain that the harvest would bring him at least £3000. But on August 1st he was startled by the report that all the potatoes of the district were blighted. He immediately hurried up to the Happy Valley, and was relieved to find his crop as flourishing as ever, in full blossom, the stalks matted across each other with richness, and promising a splendid increase. Things were quite otherwise in the lowlands, whither he rode on his return. The leaves of the potatoes, in many instances, were withered, and a strange stench, such as he had never smelled before, filled the atmosphere about every blighted field. He learned that the odor was generally the first indication of the disease, and the withered leaf followed in a day or two afterward; lastly the tubers themselves were affected and rapidly blackened and melted away. Much alarm prevailed in the country, and those who, like Mr. Trench, had staked a large amount of capital

Going to Market

on the crop became extremely uneasy, while the peasantry looked on, helplessly dismayed, at the total disappearance of the crop of all crops on which they depended for food.

Mr. Trench now went regularly each day to his mountain farm, and saw it steadily advance toward a healthy and abundant maturity until August 6th. On that day as he rode up the valley he was met by the stench. This increased as he kept on, until he could hardly bear the fearful smell. The fields still looked as promising as ever, but he recognized that their doom was sealed. As soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, he attempted to save himself from total loss by converting into starch as many of the potatoes as could be rescued from the impending decay, but the sum realized was more than counterbalanced by the expense.

Desolation, misery, and starvation now rapidly affected the poorer classes throughout Ireland. In the comparatively fertile and prosperous midland counties there were few deaths from actual starvation; yet many succumbed to impure and insufficient diet, while fever, dysentery, and the crowding in the workhouse carried off thousands.

It took time for would-be helpers to realize the extent and seriousness of the catastrophe, but public relief works were soon set on foot by the government,

soup kitchens were established, free trade was partially adopted, Indian meal poured into the country, and money was supplied without limit; yet still the people died. The trouble seemed to be that the sufferers had neither the strength nor energy to seek the aid offered even when it was near at hand. Not far from two hundred thousand perished in all, and as a result of the distress vast numbers emigrated.

A considerable period elapsed before the country recovered from the disaster. This was illustrated by Mr. Trench's experience in Kerry, where he went toward the end of 1849, by request of Lord Lansdowne, one of the great proprietors of the county. The misery of the famine years had been especially marked at Kenmare. His lordship had there an estate of sixty thousand acres, lying in an extensive valley about thirty miles long and sixteen broad. Little grain was grown in the district, and the portions of land reclaimed from the rocky mountains were so small that they were barely sufficient to grow potatoes and turnips enough for the sustenance of the people and their cattle through the winter. No restraint had been put on the subdivision of holdings, and boys and girls not yet out of their teens married unchecked, without thinking it necessary to provide aught for their future beyond a shed to shelter them and a bit of land for a potato patch. Innumerable squatters had settled

unquestioned in huts on the mountain sides and in the remote glens; and when supplies ran short, as they did in the spring or by the beginning of summer nearly every year, these squatters nailed up the doors of their cabins, took all their children along with them, and started out on a migratory and piratical expedition over the counties of Kerry and Cork, trusting to their adroitness and good luck in begging to keep the family alive until the potato crop again matured. When the rot attacked this staple, and it melted completely away before the eyes of the people, Kenmare was paralyzed. All were reduced to nearly equal poverty, and begging was out of the question. Thus it happened that the wretched dwellers of the upland huts were reduced to dire straits, and great numbers of them succumbed to their fate almost without a struggle.

By the time Mr. Trench came to Kenmare the famine was about over, but its after effects were still formidable, and the people were dying nearly as fast as ever of fever, scurvy, and other complaints within the walls of the workhouse. The workhouse itself was not large enough to accommodate the unfortunates who flocked to it, and large auxiliary sheds had been erected to shelter the overflow. About ten thousand persons in the vicinity were receiving relief. Mr. Trench first gave his attention to reducing the crowd in the poor-house, and to this end promised the inmates outside

work near by and reasonable wages. His intention was to put them at draining, subsoiling, removing rocks and stones, and like labor. At once three hundred gaunt, half-famished men, and nearly as many women and boys, presented themselves, expecting him not only to provide employment, but tools. They were too weak to be very effective, and accomplished not much more than one-fourth of what they would have under ordinary conditions.

Now that they had work, they could no longer lodge in the poorhouse, and their scattered home huts were in most instances so far distant that walking to them for housing after the day's labor was out of the question. As a result, every cabin in the town was packed nightly with these unhappy work-people, and they slept by threes and fours together, wherever they could get a pallet of straw to lie on. They lived from hand to mouth, and on a wet day, when they could not labor, nearly one-half of them were obliged to return for the time being to the poorhouse, and the sudden influx of such a body of famished newcomers created great confusion. Mr. Trench saw plainly that this could not go on, and with Lord Lansdowne's approval and financial support he put into practice another scheme. He offered free emigration to every man, woman, and child now in the poorhouse who was chargeable to his lordship's estate. This was not wholly philanthropy;

A Dwindling Haystack

for though it was believed that the paupers would gain thereby, it was also argued that it was cheaper to pay their passage abroad than to continue to support them at home. They were allowed to select what port in America they pleased, whether Boston, New York, New Orleans, or Quebec.

The announcement was at first scarcely credited. To the dwellers of the workhouse it was considered too good news to be true. But when it began to be believed and appreciated, there was an instant rush to get away. A selection was made, and two hundred each week were conducted to Cork, under close surveillance, to keep them from scattering, and were soon safely on board the emigrant ship. They made a motley company; but notwithstanding the distress of their circumstances, they were in the most uproarious spirits. There was no crying or lamentation. All was delight at having escaped the deadly workhouse. The majority of them spoke only the Irish language, and these wild batches direct from the stricken boglands of the old country must have presented a strange spectacle when they landed on the wharves of America; yet Mr. Trench affirms that nearly all, even to the widows and children, found employment immediately after arriving, and adds that they have acquitted themselves, in their adopted land, most creditably. It was many months before the desire for free emigration was satisfied, and

the poorhouse filled as fast as it was emptied. In all, forty-six hundred persons were assisted across the sea from this single estate, and very greatly to its benefit. It was no longer over-populated, small holdings were combined, and the tenants were enabled to win much better livings than had been possible before.

V

IN THE GOLDEN VALE

IT did not look golden from my window in the second story of a hotel at Kilmallock. Down below was a rough, dirty street, wet with recent showers, and all of the place that was in sight had an appearance of grimy, hopeless decadence which, unfortunately, is far too characteristic of the Irish towns throughout Erin.

Kilmallock was a fortified town in the Middle Ages, and two massive towers and remnants of the old walls are still standing. In the near meadows is another reminiscence of medievalism, — the extensive remains of a fine abbey that was wrecked by Cromwell in the course of his devastating conquest of the island. The

place has seen stirring times, and some of its days of turmoil are yet fresh in men's memories. A prominent feature of the chief street is a monument, spoken of by the inhabitants as a "Fenian Cross," erected "in memory of the heroic dead" of 1798 and 1867. Among the names inscribed on the stone are those of two "who died for Ireland at Kilmallock on March 6th, 1867," and of three who, shortly after that date, "were done to death in English prisons."

That fatal 6th of March marked the high-tide of the land agitation. The Limerick people rose to assert what they believed were their rights, and a real battle on a small scale was fought in Kilmallock's streets. The townfolk and the farmers, to the number of two thousand, armed themselves and made a night assault on the local government barracks. But informers had given the constabulary an inkling of what was coming, and they were on their guard, and reënforcements promptly came to their assistance. For a time the town ways were full of uproar, and bullets flew, and there was loss of life on both sides. In the end the mob yielded to the soldiery, and the leaders of the insurrection were apprehended and imprisoned, and some of their number were later transported to "the Bush" in Australia.

There were similar risings in other districts, all short-lived, with the same melancholy outcome. The

Dispensers of Charity

Irish had hoped to gain successes that would bring on a general struggle, in which event they believed the Americans would take their part, and Erin would win its independence. The rancor of these conflicts between the populace and the government has not yet died out, and the informers will be remembered as "traitors" and "scabs" as long as they live. They are blacklisted, and are social outcasts; they are handicapped in making a living, and their sons and daughters cannot contract desirable marriages.

This attempt to liberate Ireland originated with the "Fenian Brotherhood," a vast organization that had members in all parts of the world. New York was the headquarters of the league. It had money at its disposal, and, more than that, soldiers trained by the American Civil War. But all was not harmony among the would-be revolutionists, and their enthusiasm was not without alloy. A leader of the movement in Dublin expressed his dissatisfaction with the American allies by declaring that the recruits they furnished were exceedingly few, and that they were merely "glib talkers, lavish of boast and promise, who did more harm than good by their glozing words and scanty deeds." However, preparations went on apace for a rising, arms and munitions of war were purchased, military exercises were practised, and on the 31st of May, 1866, the Fenians in America invaded Canada. They occupied Fort

Erie, defeated the Canadian volunteers, and captured some flags. But the United States interfered to enforce the neutrality of its frontier, arrested most of the leaders, and extinguished the invasion.

The Fenians in England planned the capture of Chester Castle, with the intention of seizing its military stores. Then they expected to cut off telegraphic communications, hasten to Holyhead, take possession of such steamers as might be there, and invade Ireland before the authorities could prepare for the blow. The plan, however, was betrayed, and came to nothing.

The attempt to foment a general rising in Erin itself in March, 1867, was hardly more successful. The very elements fought against it, and snow, rare in Ireland, fell with disheartening insistence. The persons engaged in the movement were either American and Irish-American adventurers, or artisans, day laborers, and mechanics, generally unprovided with arms and, in many cases, scarcely beyond the years of boyhood. The only military enterprises undertaken by them consisted in attacks on the barracks of the rural constabulary. These attacks were almost without exception defeated, and as a rule the parties dispersed of their own accord, or were made prisoners after a single night's campaign. The rest betook themselves to the mountains; but a few days of exposure and hardship, in which they managed to evade pursuit, sufficed to

entirely discourage them, and none of the bands long held together.

The leaders of the insurrection were promptly tried by a special commission, and tranquillity for a time seemed to be restored in Ireland. But the Fenian Brotherhood continued to exist, and there was still much discontent. Considerable alarm was created in England and Scotland by the daring of the league. An assault was made in the open day on a police-van in Manchester, and the officer in charge was killed, and his prisoners, who were suspected Fenians, were released. A few weeks later an attempt was made to blow up the Clerkenwell prison, to set free some Fenians held there. But the explosion failed to accomplish its purpose. Instead, several innocent persons were killed, and the perpetrator was hanged. Rumors were circulated of intended burnings in the cities and towns, gunsmith's shops and even government stores were broken open and pillaged, and there was for a time a vague but wide-spread feeling of apprehension.

The disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1869 and the land act of 1870 removed some of the grievances most complained of, and the Fenians became less belligerent, and turned their attention to righting wrongs by political agitation. There still is talk of war whenever English arms are desperately engaged abroad, but the hopelessness and folly of it are apparent to all save

a few extremists, and the peace of Ireland's future seems assured.

To see the vale of Limerick in its "golden" aspect you have to leave the town. Then you find yourself amid a wide sweep of lowlands, fertile and luscious beyond any other part of Ireland. The generous fields are bounded by hawthorn hedgerows, and there are no bogs, and no wastes of stony hillsides, which, one or both, are common in most sections. If you overlook the vale from the crest of one of its gentle undulations, and see the sun strike down to the earth through a break in the clouds, the fields brighten beneath the caress of the warm rays into a fresh, juicy, lightsome green, so charming in color and suggestiveness that you feel it must have been some such vision which inspired the island's prefix of "Emerald." The greenness of Ireland is not, however, confined to any chance play of light. Few countries are more moist and showery, and fewer still, in the temperate zone, can rival Ireland's equable freedom from extremes of heat and cold.

The Golden Vale is a great dairy district, and the land is in the main devoted to grazing and to raising cattle feed. Local creameries take all the milk produced, separate the cream, and make butter for the English market. Their product finds a ready sale at a good price, while the butter made in Irish farmhouses is regarded askance, and not without reason. The

A Farm in the Golden Vale

farmers bring their milk to the creameries in great clumsy cans known as "churns," a name originating in their shape, which resembles that of the old up-and-down variety of those articles. A two-wheeled cart drawn by a donkey is the usual conveyance. The driver may be the farmer, a hired man or boy, or possibly one of the women of the farm household. When the churns are emptied they are refilled with skim milk, which is taken home to feed the calves.

The farms in southern Ireland vary in size from a few acres to many hundreds, but holdings of less than fifty acres are accounted small, while those rising above that number are spoken of as large. Land of exceptional quality and placing will yield a rental of £2 an acre. Ten to fifteen shillings is, however, nearer the average. Farm homes are apt to be unprepossessing and beggarly, even where the inmates are well-to-do. The Irish, from long-established habits or lack of pride, seem to have no concern as to the appearance of their dwellings, and they take little interest in making improvements, though this is partly because they in most cases do not and never will own the property they occupy.

The ordinary small farmer goes to and from town driving a donkey or a horse attached to a springless and seatless farm cart. He sits on one side just in front of the wheel, with his legs hanging off over the

shaft. The vehicle is diminutive, yet on occasion it will accommodate half a dozen persons in one position and another. Large farmers drive a jaunting-car or a trap. When their wives are along, the distinction between the large and the small farmers is still more marked, as the women of the former class are addicted to wearing hats and bonnets. Yet such a test is not a sure one, for among the younger women, rich and poor alike, the tendency is to more and more recognize fashion and discard the plebeian shawl as a head covering.

A large proportion of the laborers in the Golden Vale come from the comparatively sterile neighboring county of Kerry, where wages are decidedly less. The Sundays of March are the hiring days, and these are marked by a great deal of hurly-burly in Kilmallock, which is the labor centre for all the eastern part of County Limerick. Hundreds of the Kerry "boys and girls" congregate on its streets each recurring Sunday, to bargain for places with the farmers who drive in from many miles round about.

The weather was showery while I was at Kilmallock, but there were bright spells intermingled, so that I was not kept indoors. I liked best to wander out into the farming country. The people on the road always greeted me with a friendly nod and a "Good day," and I often talked with them, and occasionally

By the Kitchen Fireside

visited their homes. One farmer who entertained me was a man named Lynch. He was prosperous, and his farm was well-tilled, but his dwelling and its surroundings were nevertheless not without hints of squalor. The farmyard was the heart of the establishment, with the house, the cowshed, and the various lesser buildings hemming it in on three sides. Its slimy, ill-odored area was the picking-ground of the hens and ducks and of a flitting flock of sparrows, and it was the gathering-place for all sorts of wrecked vehicles, broken tools, and other rubbish. Several children were running about the farmyard when I entered it, and not far from the house door twenty or thirty calves were feeding from a trough.

While I was regarding the confusion of this well-populated enclosure, a poor old woman came groaning in at the gate, hobbled along to the porch, and rapped at the door. The housewife promptly appeared, and without a word stepped past her caller across the yard to the granary. She soon returned with as many potatoes as she could carry in her hands, and emptied them into the old woman's apron. This garment was held by its wearer gathered up into a sacklike receptacle which was already half full before the potatoes were added. Apparently the old woman was a beggar doing a wholesale business. She bestowed a mumbled blessing on her benefactor and went groaning away.

I learned later that mendicants of her class are an accepted Irish institution. Quite a number of them make their homes in Kilmallock, and each day leave their hovels to scour the surrounding country, only taking care not to go over the same route too often. But the most numerous beggars are those without fixed abode. Such usually spend their nights at some peasant's cottage, sleeping by the fire. In the morning they are perhaps invited to share the family breakfast, or, if not that, will at least be allowed the use of the fireplace, to cook whatever they may choose to draw from the supplies that they are carrying along.

The appeals of the beggars are rarely refused, and at one place they get potatoes, at another a little bread, or flour, or tea, or a bit of money. Their gatherings are in some instances considerable, and they often have a surplus to sell, and may even accumulate a certain wealth. The householders near Kilmallock expected one or two appeals every day, as a matter of course. Some of the beggars are able-bodied ne'er-do-wells; but probably the majority are no longer capable of supporting themselves by labor, and are simply endeavoring to keep for a little longer out of the dreaded workhouse.

Their antipathy to the workhouse, as far as concerned that at Kilmallock, was largely a matter of sentiment, and not founded on any reasonable fear of

bodily hardship; for the buildings provided for the unfortunates were substantial and clean, and the inmates were well treated. They are given plenty of bread, milk, and potatoes, and they have their tea, and twice a week meat is furnished. But in the poorer districts of Ireland the workhouse conditions are not so favorable. Taxes cannot be raised to properly house or feed the numerous paupers, and they are very wretched, and the sick often have no one to care for them but feeble old women inmates of the institutions.

Like most farmhouses of the region, the Lynch dwelling had a thatch roof, and was low and primitive. That the kitchen was the family living-room was proclaimed by the sloppiness of its rough, cobble floor, and its general disorder. All of one side was taken up by a wide, open fireplace, with an accompaniment of pots, kettles, shoes, and other litter. Conspicuous in a convenient corner of the room stood the swill-barrel. On the walls were hung pieces of harness, a tin lantern, a slab of bacon, and a variety of clothing, cooking utensils, and farm tools. The only touch of the æsthetic I observed consisted in a decorative arrangement of dishes on the dresser.

I passed through the house to the side opposite that which opened on the farmyard, and there found a plot of grass, a few flowers, trees, and shrubs, and a tidy garden. This side of the building was its front,

in the polite acceptation of the term; but the mildewed door and the mossy pavement leading from it, half overgrown with vagrant weeds sprouting undisturbed in the crevices, showed plainly that the "front" might nearly as well not have existed.

A few days after my visit at the Lynch dwelling a chance shower drove me to shelter in another farm-house, where a tall, white-capped old woman wiped off a backless kitchen chair for me with her apron, and after remarking she hoped the weather was not "broke," went on about her work. A brisk fire burned within the fireplace, and over it hung a big iron kettle, from which wisps of steam were puffing out around the edges of its cover. A young woman sat beside the fire turning an iron wheel, and I at first imagined she was churning, and watched her for some time before I discovered that, instead, she was working a bellows. Coal is the usual fuel in the Golden Vale, but it is burned on the bare hearth, not in a grate, and this peculiar bellows, blowing the air through a pipe that runs under the flagging-stones, is necessary to fan the fire into brightness and heat.

For baking purposes peat, or "turf," as it is called, is bought from "hawkers," who peddle it on carts from house to house. It comes in blocks, each three or four times the size of a brick; and a score, with an extra one thrown in for good measure, cost six-

Work in a Potato Field

pence. Ovens are only found in "gintlemin's" houses. Farmers and cottagers bake their bread in a "bastable," — a low, flat kettle with a heavy cover. It is set on the coals and burning turf piled on top, and at the end of an hour the "cake," in a single, broad, round loaf, is baked. The bread is rather solid, but it is wholesome, and not unpleasant to the taste.

The rain was soon over, and I was preparing to go, when I happened to mention that I was from America. The house inmates had been friendly, but not especially sociable. Now there was a change, and the old woman, intent on keeping me a little longer, declared that I must not walk too much. "It is not good to do so, and the weather soft like," said she. "Sit down, sir, and perhaps you would take a glass of milk, sir."

The backless chair which I had been occupying was pushed out of the way, and the best in the room was set forth — one so recently purchased that the shine of the varnish was still apparent on it. Then the old woman got me a cup of rich, sweet milk, and sat down to ask questions about "the States," and to tell about friends she had there. Lastly she spoke of a son who had crossed the Atlantic, long, long years ago; and the tears came to her eyes while she related how he had sickened and died there. Ah! America was a fine country, but she did not think it was a

healthy one. The old woman's interest was not greater than that of the girl by the fire, who herself intended to emigrate to America the next year.

Those who go, rarely return, though stragglers come on visits. The few prodigals who settle permanently in their native island usually bring money with them and go into business. Most often they are impelled by the desire to buy back some little shop or other interest that has been a pride of their families in the past, but which has been lost through misfortune.

I was at Kilmallock over Sunday, and in the early morning walked out to a country parish some miles distant to attend eight o'clock mass. The church was a plain, spireless structure, ungraced by vines and unshadowed by trees, standing in the midst of a hilltop group of thatched cottages. Neighboring it on one side was a creamery, and I could hear the hum of machinery and the puff of steam the same as if it had been a week day. Many milk carts were hitched along the wayside near the creamery and in front of the houses adjoining the church, and there were numbers of other vehicles, — traps, jaunting-cars, and heavy farm carts, with their accompanying donkeys, mules, and horses of all sizes, colors, and conditions. The aspect of the village was more suggestive of a market or fair than a religious gathering, and this secular look was further emphasized by a canvas-covered booth open for busi-

ness beside the churchyard gate. Here were sold prayer-books and other Catholic publications, beads, crosses, and a variety of gaudy church emblems and images. This ecclesiastical mart was, however, temporary, and would be discontinued at the end of a fortnight's special services that were being held.

The interior of the church had a row of pews along the walls on either hand, unpainted, battered, and dingy, and in the broad aisle between was a line of backless benches. All the seats were full when I arrived, and many people stood in the narrow passages and in the open space at the rear. It was evident that the women had on their Sunday garments, but many of the men wore their ordinary work clothes and heavy, dirty shoes, just as they had come from the milk wagons.

Up before the altar was a priest in a gorgeous yellow gown, with an attendant robed in black and white. I was hardly able to catch a word in the whole service, as far as the priest's part was concerned, for he began his sentences with a mumble which faded rapidly away into a nearly inaudible murmur. Indeed, I thought it all very perfunctory and meaningless, yet I could not help feeling that it was satisfying to the congregation. Their devout attentiveness never flagged, and they conned their prayer-books with exemplary persistence. It seemed to me that most of the time was spent in kneeling. I tried to accommodate myself to the

routine of the service, but my knees gave out on the hard stone floor, and I had to stand, at the risk of appearing heretical. There was no organ and no singing. Country communities are not musical. Their churches have no choirs, and the old-fashioned people object to the introduction of an organ, because they think its "noise" is not religious, and that it is opposed to a genuine spirit of worship.

After mass came communion, and the worshippers in relays went up to the front seat and knelt while the priest gave them each an indistinct blessing, and administered a wafer from a goblet that he carried. This goblet his assistant refilled as often as the supply ran low. The communicants did not touch the wafers themselves, but opened their mouths, and the priest placed one on each awaiting tongue. That the wafers are the real body and blood of Christ the communicants did not doubt; and if a crumb dropped, some one was pretty sure to pick it up and eat it, to get the benefit of its mystic virtues, whatever those might be.

When the worshippers left the church, those who had teams betook themselves to their milk carts and other vehicles, and drove away, while the rest scattered down the roads and lanes on foot. I mentioned to a man of the latter class that the congregation was a very full one; but he said, "Ah, no! that is nothing at all, sir,

to what there will be at the eliven o'clock mass. There will be five times as many thin."

I did not think my knees were equal to another service, and I returned to Kilmallock. In the afternoon the town was well-nigh deserted by the male population, who went harum-scaruming off somewhere in long-cars, jaunting-cars, and odds and ends of other vehicles, to see the favorite Irish game of hockey played, or, as they expressed it, "to see the hurrling match." Sunday is a holy day only during mass. The rest of the time the people spell it holiday, and are ready for whatever recreation offers. They go fishing, they go in swimming, they play on the village greens, and you may, on occasion, see a crowd blackening the walls of a country lane for half a mile, watching a bowling match.

Toward evening, while walking on the town outskirts, I accosted an elderly farmer who was standing meditating in his potato patch, with his hands beneath his coat-tails.

"God save ye," said he, in response to my greeting.

"We are going to have a fair day to-morrow, are we not?" I questioned.

"Well, I don't know thin," he replied. "I don't like the look o' thim castles" — pointing to some snowy cloud-banks on the horizon.

We changed to the subject of potatoes — "spuds"

or "Murphys" he called them; and presently he suggested that I should climb the fence and go with him to his house. It was a thick-walled, thatched house adjoining an old, ivy-grown tower that had formerly been a grist-mill. A stream flowed close by which looked peaceful enough, but which Mr. Fennessey — that was his name — declared sometimes became a torrent in the winter, and set back over the banks and invaded his home. The family restrained the water by banks of earth as well as they could. These, however, were not always effective, and the water at times flooded the lower floors to the depth of three feet. Once the water rose in the night, and the farmer awoke in the morning to find his bed afloat and rocking. He complained a good deal of the condition of his house, and of the landlord's unwillingness to make improvements. At the same time, except for the flooding, he said it was much better than the average house of fifty years ago.

"Ye seldom see a mud house in the prisent," he explained; "but thin they were common. The mud part was the walls, which was a mixture of clay, rushes, and gravel. A man in his bare feet would tread it as it was put up, and ivery time a layer a half-yard thick was put on it had to be left for a few days to dry. Whin it was high enough it was pared down smooth, and 'twas riddy for the roof, which in

thim days was as like to be turf as thatch, with perhaps an ould boiler stuck up through for a chimney. The walls wint fast if the roof broke a leak, but so long as they was kep'dry they was all right. Mud walls that ye see now are whitewashed, and a stranger such as you might not know what was underneath. They used to be left their natural brown color. The floors, thim days, was dirt, and so they are now in our ould counthry cottages; but cement is comin' to be gineral in the towns, though that wears uneven, too, after a while, and gets broken, in spite of ye."

We were sitting during this relation in Mr. Fennessey's kitchen, a small, crowded apartment, whose chief articles of furniture were a dresser, several rickety chairs, and a table with some black pots huddled beneath. A bobtailed hen was picking about underfoot, and two dogs were snoozing on the borders of the fireplace.

"This room wad be a big house intirely, in thim days I'm tellin' ye of," Mr. Fennessey continued; "and you'd be lucky if there was not props here and yon to howld up the rafters, and holes leakin' down, and a large family livin' in it, too."

Of late the poorer hovels in the Golden Vale have been largely replaced by cottages built by the county. These, though small, are comfortable and substantial. There are three rooms below, and, under the peak of

the roof above, are one or two more, to which ascent is made by a narrow stairway very like a step-ladder. The rent is one shilling a week, and a half-acre of land goes with the cottage, so that the tenants can have their own garden and keep a donkey and perhaps a goat or a little Kerry cow. What the half-acre patch of land lacks in supporting the creatures can be made up by feeding them along the highways, and by the foraging of the children. Some of this foraging is not very sensitive to rights in property, and I remember seeing an undaunted small boy pulling wisps of hay from the outer side of a loaded cart in the publicity of Kilmallock's principal street. The driver had gone into a shop, and now and then the boy paused and peeped furtively beneath the wagon, to assure himself that the coast was still clear. Finally, with his arms full, the ragamuffin scudded for home.

The cottagers usually keep hens and ducks, and in some instances geese and turkeys, and the fowls and their eggs are chiefly sold to "egg-hawkers," who go about buying them to ship to England. The prices realized are not what they might be, for the Irish are only beginning to learn the relation between price and quality, and, as a rule, their fowls are of a small, poor breed.

"My good man," said Mr. Fennessey, at length, "as we have no liquor in the house, would you sit with us and have a cup of tea?"

Farmyard Ducks

I accepted the invitation, and the wife set the black tea-kettle on the coals and turned the crank of the creaky bellows. Soon we had gathered around the centre table in the best room to a lunch of bread and butter and tea. The children waited for second table. Only the four youngest of the original thirteen were left. The rest had departed from the parental roof, and were scattered far and wide over the earth. One son was living in California.

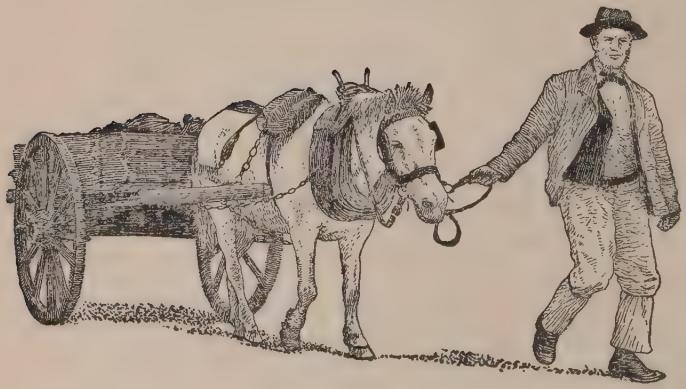
"If you ever go to Los Angels," said my host, "hunt up John Fennessey. You just mintion the ould folks at Kilmallock, and you will be sure of a warrum wilcome."

Mrs. Fennessey kept my cup replenished, even putting in the sugar and stirring it herself. She took a more personal interest in my affairs than did her companion, and early in our converse wanted to know if I had "an ould woman" at home. Not till she had repeated the question twice did I comprehend that she was asking if I had a wife.

I enjoyed my visit, and I enjoyed the lunch, and when I prepared to leave Kilmallock and went to bid the Fennesseys good-by, I felt as if I was parting from old friends; and the impression given by the hospitality of the people all through the Golden Vale was most agreeable. They did you a favor as though it was for their own pleasure. When I said, "Thank

you," I was almost certain of the quick response, "And all for nothing, sir. It was no trouble at all."

In thinking over my experiences, therefore, I concluded that whatever the section lacked of being like its name in landscapes and agricultural affluence was more than made up by the sympathetic kindliness of its inhabitants.



VI

AN IRISH WRITER AND HER HOME

IN 1891 there was published in Dublin a thin book of poems entitled "Bogland Studies," and the author, as announced by the title-page, was J. Barlow. Like most books of poems by unknown writers, "Bogland Studies" was brought out at the author's expense; but, unlike the common run of them, the verse was characterized by striking originality, refined feeling, and great aptness and vigor of expression. Still the world was very full of books, and few bought the modest volume. Its writer was nearly as unknown as before, when, presently, the book fell into the hands of a London editor, who read it with such interest that he looked up the name on the title-page and wrote a letter to "Mr. J. Barlow."

Great was his surprise when J. Barlow proved to be no Mister at all, but Miss Jane Barlow, daughter of a Dublin professor. Forthwith the editor introduced Miss Barlow to the literary public, and induced her to write a series of short stories in prose. These form her "Irish Idylls," so far the best-known book she has produced. They deserve to grow in public favor, for truer and more entertaining transcripts of peasant life we have never had. Yet they will not appeal to the masses; they are too quiet, too simple, too delicate in flavor, to stir minds that crave high-seasoned action and a plot full of turmoil and mystery. Such stories as Miss Barlow's are reserved for the enjoyment of those who like sometimes to see nature and life as loiterers, and to catch the slighter odors and tints and twinklings that escape the person who must go through a book on the jump or not at all. The stories lack the spice of sensation; but to the lover of sweet and simple realities they are full of interest and sparkle.

I do not recall anything in imaginative literature that deals with life that in itself and in its environment is so humble as in the several books written by Miss Barlow. The scene of her stories is always the Connemara district of the Irish west coast, a forbidding region of water-soaked bogland, sombre loughs, and stony mountains. In the forlorn little villages on this bogland live the people she describes. Lisconnel is

A Pedler of Distillery Waste

the place that appears oftenest in her stories — a hamlet of ten houses, counting one with the roof fallen in. It is seven miles to a neighbor village. No one in Lisconnel owns a cow, such is the poverty of the inhabitants, and the live-stock is limited to a few goats, pigs, and chickens; even these disappear speedily in bad seasons. The cabins are small, their furnishings meagre, wind and frost find easy entrance through their unchinked stone walls, and the rain drips through the rush-thatched roofs. The wet fields, fenced off by stone walls into tiny squares about the houses, yield scant crops of potatoes and oats. The pinch of poverty makes itself felt in every household, and hunger is a not infrequent visitor.

Could one have more scanty material for story-writing? Yet, as the Irish say in one of their proverbs, "There are plenty of things beside turf to be found in a bog;" and one of the things that Miss Barlow finds there is human nature. The sympathetic reader sees himself in these humble villagers, and he feels a strange interest in their struggles, their loves, their sacrifices and heroism, their quaint conversations and views of the world; and he could not be more vividly impressed with the loneliness of the bog and the cheer of its sunshine and the frowning frequency of its showers were he himself a bogland dweller. The descriptions are indeed all so con-

vincing it was something of a shock to me to learn that Lisconnel was not a real village at all, and that the author neither lived in nor anywhere near such a place.

Miss Barlow's home is on the other side of the island, at Raheny, a suburb of Dublin, four miles out of the city. Raheny is a shapeless, straggling little hamlet with parklike, tree-dotted fields round about. It has two inns, two churches, the same number of schoolhouses, and a single shabby little shop. On the day I was there the most notable human feature of the village was a row of men near its chief inn, sitting or standing along a house wall. They were laborers waiting to be hired. It did not seem a very energetic way of finding work, but it saved shoe-leather and perhaps nervous wear and tear, and it is the Irish custom.

The station-master said there was no middle class in the village — they had only "swells and laborers." The dwellings seemed to bear out his statement; for they were either the retiring homes of gentlefolk, with lawns and shrubbery about, shut away from the gaze of the street-passers by high stone walls, or the barren little cottages of the peasantry. The cottages congregated thickest along a small stream that ran through the village centre. Many of them had thatch roofs, often weedy and green-mossed. Their surroundings were very untidy, and quite in keeping with the dilapidated

WAITING TO BE HIRED

aspect of the buildings themselves. Several dogs were lazing about the doorways, scratching at the fleas that infested their scraggy coats. One of them, which looked rather younger and brighter than the rest, was sitting on a bag near a cottage doorway. This luxury of having a seat suggested that he was the household pet; and, by way of introducing myself to the woman of the house, I remarked, "That's a nice dog you have."

"He's more than nice — he's good," was her proud response.

I had not intended my words to be taken too literally, and I did not pursue the subject further, but looked into the woman's kitchen. It had a rough and not overclean dirt floor. The walls were of rudely plastered stones, partly hidden, as was the ceiling, by newspapers pasted together, forming a queer sort of tapestry. It was a tiny room, yet there were in it two rickety beds, some scantily filled shelves of crockery, several chairs, and various other household belongings. Not much spare standing room was left.

The hens of the neighborhood wandered in and out of the cottage doors, and with the other fowls held conventions around the house fronts, very much as they pleased. While I was looking in at the living-room of the woman who owned a "good" dog, a boy drove up a flock of turkeys. They stopped in front

of the cottage, and the woman came out with a pan of feed. She knelt down before them and doled out the food, and saw that they all had a fair chance, at the same time giving a smart rap every once in a while at her neighbor's ducks that showed a tendency to steal up and grab for a share.

The cottage dwellers had no water supply in their homes, but went for it either to the convenient stream or to an iron pump in the middle of the street. The women were mostly frowzy-headed and slovenly, and the children were ragged and dirty. But what the little folk lacked in immaculateness of attire and person was more than made up by their liveliness and piquant individuality. They had nothing of the shyness of English children. One of them, a small boy, carrying a crooked sapling with a line attached, wanted me to go down to the stream and see him catch "pinkeens"; and they all showed a good deal of volubility and the spirit of investigation.

I saw one little drama of child life that illustrates the methods of child training in general vogue in Ireland — methods not unknown in some other parts of the world. It took place in a field back of a cottage where two venerable goats were feeding. In the shadow of the cottage stood a woman waiting for a little boy, who had crawled through the hedge at the far side of the field, and now came running toward her

HUNGRY

with a bottle hugged tight in his arms. I suppose he was returning from some errand. Then, in the middle of the field, there was a false step, a tumble, and a smash of glass. The mother started forward and picked up a switch, and the boy got up whining and began edging away, while the goats looked on in long-whiskered surprise. The nearer the mother came, the more the little one dodged, and presently he took to his heels and ran back of the house with his mother in close pursuit.

Donkey carts were the most frequent vehicles seen on the Raheny streets. Both carts and donkeys seemed very small, and when a grown man or a woman sat perched on the seat, the size of the rider seemed quite disproportionate to that of the cart and the creature which drew it. But the donkeys were sober beasts, and apparently were contented with their lot, though I did encounter a single exception — a tiny specimen pulling a cart with two young men in it up a hill, and braying in a manner distinctly alarming and protesting. One donkey, with a lad in charge, was drawing a load of sour-smelling distillery waste about the village. The stuff looked like wet sawdust, but the boy said it was barley, and that he sold it a pailful at a time, to feed hens and pigs.

Both the village schools were supervised by the government, but one was conducted under Protestant

auspices and the other was controlled by the Catholics. The Protestant building was neat and modern. The Catholic schoolhouse, on the contrary, was dismal and old-fashioned. It was low and broad, with gray plaster walls. Within were two rooms — one for the boys, one for the girls — each in charge of a separate teacher. The girls' room was nearest the street, and, as the door was open, I went in.

Thirty or forty scholars were present, between the ages of four and twelve. The room was of fair size, with grimy, whitewashed walls and long, unpainted benches. Near the entrance was a small, much-battered organ and a table for the teacher's use, behind which was the room's one chair. The table drawers were gone, and it was as cheap and shaky a specimen of a table as I have ever seen. The thin, middle-aged woman who presided over the school politely offered me the one chair as soon as I entered the room, and I carelessly accepted, and nearly lost my balance sitting down in it, for the chair toppled sideways in a manner to suggest that it had only three legs. I braced myself accordingly, and as soon as the teacher looked away I took advantage of the opportunity to slide my hand back and investigate. The fourth leg was there, after all, and the only trouble was that it was an inch short at the bottom, making the chair a sort of primitive rocker.

The teacher gave all her time to entertaining me, and turned the school over to three of her oldest pupils, each in charge of a section. The youngest section, composed of infants, adjourned to the back of the room, where they arranged themselves in a double semicircle and began picking out words on a wall chart. They were aided in their efforts by the girl monitor, armed with a long stick which was intended for a pointer, but which she did not confine strictly to that use. This girl was nervously disposed, and when a child missed and had to go to the foot she would take the delinquent by the shoulders and push it along to its new place with quite unnecessary energy. If a child's answer came too slowly, she would brisken its ideas by a tap from her stick. Once, when one of her charges was out of order, she gave the culprit a slap with her hand.

Another section of the school sat in a group among the seats, and the girl who acted as their teacher stood facing them between a bench and desk.

The third section were on their feet gathered about a girl who was sitting on a bench at the side of the room with her back against the wall, eating a lunch. The children in her care had slates in their hands, and were doing "sums."

On the whole, the scene in the schoolroom was very easy-going, social, and domestic, but I was not

impressed that the children were making any very determined progress in the acquisition of knowledge. As for their surroundings, they were rather cheerless and depressing. The only attempt at brightness in the room was a row of colored prints that the teacher had pinned up on the wall.

After a time I carefully rose from my crippled chair and bade the teacher "Good day," with the intention of paying a visit to the boys' room. I went around to the other side of the building and rapped. No response. I rapped again, and failed to attract attention as completely as I had before. I could see the children through the keyhole, but there was such a clatter of voices and buzz of lips that, though I rapped two or three times more, I did not make myself heard. This was too much, and I abandoned them to their uproar and came away.

I thought, from what I saw of the village, that Raheny held plenty of raw material for a writer who made peasant life her field in fiction, and it seemed odd that Miss Barlow should neglect this for distant Connemara. Miss Barlow's home is about five minutes' walk from the station, in what is known as "The Cottage." As you approach it, you glimpse over the intervening street wall a long thatched roof shadowed by tree-foliage. I wondered if it could be that Miss Barlow lived under that humble thatch. After

all, it would not be out of keeping, considering the subjects she chooses to write of and the quiet manner in which she tells her stories. But a little farther on I came to a mildly imposing gateway, with a little shadowed lodge at one side. Thence a tidy driveway led to a near mansion. It was not a pretentious mansion, but just of comfortable size, with a homelike air about its vine-clad walls that was attractive. The structure was rather unusual. It was in three parts, beginning near the street with the low thatched cottage, which was followed in the middle by a larger and more recent structure, while at the rear it rose in a modern dwelling of comparatively imposing proportions. It was like some slow vegetable growth pushing out successively into newer and larger forms, or as if here was a house with its own father and grandfather under its protection on the ancestral grounds.

The cottage section of the house is inconvenient, but its age and associations protect it. Miss Barlow acknowledges a good deal of fondness for it, and pains are taken to get it rethatched when the roof gets bad. The thatch, in the accumulation of many renewals, has grown to a ponderous thickness, and makes the cottage look like some vast mushroom. There were holes in the roof torn by rats and birds that build their nests in it, and a young plane tree had shot up from one of its depressions to a height of two feet. But my visit

shortly antedated the coming of a thatcher, under whose hand I suppose these touches of picturesqueness disappeared.

Indoors the house is what any gentleman's of moderate means might be, except that the upstairs parlor is given a churchlike air by a pipe organ filling one end of the room. This is used by Professor Barlow, the author's father.

The station-master mentioned to me that all the members of the family were very nice people, and "not swells, if they did belong to the gentry." He had read some of Miss Barlow's books, and he was quite appreciative; for he declared she "got the talk of the Connemarese fine." One of the village women with whom I spoke, and who said she frequently did scrubbing at the Barlows', was, like the station-master, a warm admirer of the family, and agreed with him about the merits of "Miss Jane's" books. The comment of these two critics was not praise that meant they caught the atmosphere and delicate flavor of the stories, but which showed that the life portrayed in the printed pages was most accurately interpreted.

The stories convey the same sense of reality to the stranger who has never seen the country, and as he reads he feels that Miss Barlow understands the peasant ways and their thought and conversation in every detail. I was curious to know how she acquired

this minute knowledge. It seems that the family took a house one season and lived for a summer on the Connemara coast, and it was then that Miss Barlow absorbed the impressions of local color and character which she uses in her stories with such fidelity. One would suppose she must have been very intimate with the people themselves, she gives such full reports of their work, their homes, and their speech; yet this was not the case. What she knows she has gained mostly from outside observation, and the rest is imagination. But wherever she gets it, the bogland life of her books has the ring of truth, and it lingers long in the reader's mind, a sweet and fascinating memory.

VII

THE HIGHLANDS OF DONEGAL

WHEN I left Raheny I journeyed to the rough mountains and glens of the northwest, and the only pause worthy of note on the way was at Drogheda, a town which in itself is dull and uninteresting, but has unusual historic attraction. A few miles to the west the Protestant King William defeated the Catholic King James in the famous "Battle of the Boyne." This battle, of triumphant or bitter memory to every inhabitant of Erin, according to the individual's religious sympathies, is not allowed to sink into oblivion, but is fought over again in the more partisan sections of

DROGHEDA — AN OLD TOWN GATE

Ireland with each recurring anniversary; and unfortunately the monument erected on the banks of the Boyne is inscribed in words calculated to keep alive rather than to soothe and dispel the irritation. It reads: —

"Sacred to the glorious memory of King William the Third, who, on the 1st of July, 1690, passed the river near this place to attack James the Second at the head of a Popish army, advantageously posted on the south side of it, and did, on that day, by a single battle, secure to us, and to our posterity, our liberty, laws, and religion. In consequence of this action James the Second left his kingdom and fled to France."

What makes Drogheda most notable, however, to the delver in history, is the dismal tale of its siege by Cromwell in 1649. It was defended by three thousand English Royalist soldiers, and when their opponents forced an entrance into the town, nearly all of them were, by Cromwell's orders, put to the sword. The officers, of a remnant which surrendered, were knocked on the head, and every tenth man of the soldiers was killed, while the rest were shipped for the Barbadoes.

The old fortifications of the town have mostly disappeared, though there remain portions of the walls, and a certain breach in them is pointed out as the one through which Cromwell's troopers made their en-

trance. The finest bit of ancient architecture is the lofty gray tower of one of the old town gates, which is so well preserved it could hardly have been more perfect in its prime.

After leaving Drogheda I went on to Strabane, whence a narrow gauge railroad took me as far as Finntown, a diminutive bogland village among the mountains of Donegal, and left me stranded there. I had expected to drive on over the hills to Dunglow on the coast, fifteen miles distant. But a private conveyance was not obtainable in Finntown, and the only public one was a slender jaunting-car that met the train. This already had six passengers when I sought it out, and besides, there was a vast heap of luggage, not to mention the driver. With cheerful Irish optimism this individual declared he still had room for me; but his two-wheeled skeleton of a vehicle looked to be in imminent danger of a breakdown already. How the single horse could draw such a load was a problem, and I preferred to leave the jaunting-car to its fate, while I spent the rest of the day in seeing something of the region where I then was, on foot.

It was early in the afternoon, cold and windy, and gloomy with the shadows of threatening gray clouds. The country was one of bogs and rocks, that here and there on favoring slopes gave way to little patches of green fields alternating with plots of newly turned

CARRYING MANURE TO THE FIELDS

earth. The houses were low, one-story buildings, rarely containing more than two rooms, and of the rudest construction throughout. Roofs were invariably of thatch, criss-crossed with ropes of twisted hay that were either tied to stones dangling in a continuous row along the eaves, or to pegs driven into the house walls. The thatch was sometimes of rushes, oat straw, or heather, but most often was of a wispy grass cut on the bogs, known as "mountainy stuff."

The Donegal soil is very wet, and so yielding that horses cannot work on it. Few of the farmers own even a donkey, and all the work is done in the most laborious and primitive fashion, by hand. One man with whom I stopped to talk was carrying manure in a basket on his back from a great pile in front of his house to a near field. His boy, a lad of thirteen, was helping with a basket of smaller size. Often the women assist in this task. When the land has been dotted thickly over with the heaps dumped from the baskets, and these have been spread with forks, they break up the lumps and distribute the manure more evenly with their hands.

In a plot neighboring the one where I stopped, two men were putting the finishing touches on a small patch of oats. The ground had been prepared and the oats sown, and the men were now digging trenches through the field about eight feet apart, and scattering

the earth as they heaved it out, over the seed. But at this particular season more farmers were engaged in securing their year's supply of fuel from the "peat moss" than in tilling the soil. I could see the lonely groups bending to their work on the bog, digging out the black sods, and laying them all around the cutting, to stay until the completion of the slow two months' process of drying.

Late in the afternoon, as I was passing a hillside cottage, my attention was attracted by a curious humming sound. The door was open and I looked in. There stood a woman, barefoot in spite of the damp and chill of the hard clay floor, spinning at a great old-fashioned wool wheel — an extremely clumsy affair, which had the appearance of having been homemade about a hundred years ago. I made my presence known, and was invited in to watch the work as long as I chose to stay, though the woman expressed surprise that I should find it interesting. To her the process was commonplace, for, like most persons brought up in these Donegal homes, she had been used to it from childhood. She said the yarn was to be used in part for knitting, and in part was to be made into cloth by a weaver who had a loom in a cabin down the road. Backward and forward the spinner walked, twirling the wheel with her right hand and holding a roll of fleecy wool in her left. An attenu-

ated strand connected the roll with the tip of the spindle, which, in its rapid revolutions, twisted the wool into yarn. The spinner kept the yarn an even thickness by her practised sense of touch, and every few moments she stopped the wheel, shifted the strand, and gave the wheel another whirl to wind up at the base of the spindle the yard or two she had finished. Then the process was begun over again.

By the fire sat a wrinkled old woman, with a red kerchief on her head, carding. She held one card in her left hand, hooks upward, on her knees, and with the card in her right pulled and scratched the wool into an even fleece. That done, she loosened the wool from the hooks, took it between the backs of the cards, and rolled it into a light puff a foot long. Her supply of material was in a sack by her side, and a little two-year old girl, who was pattering about the cabin floor, now and then tried to help by pulling some of it from the bag and tucking it into the old woman's lap.

The man of the house sat on the opposite side of the fireplace smoking, except for occasional intermissions, when he removed his pipe from his mouth to spit on the floor. A second child, somewhat older than the other, was playing with a frayed patch on the leg of the man's trousers. In one corner of the room was a rude bed, in another a heap of potatoes.

Overhead were the smoke-blackened rafters of the roof, with certain cross-beams, sticks, and lines intervening, from which were suspended all sorts of household miscellany, including several of the brown bags of wool awaiting spinning. One feature of the room, that seemed out of keeping with the rest of the litter, was a modern sewing-machine of expensive make. A tin kerosene lamp was fastened against the wall, and the man said I would find such a lamp in most homes, though there were families so poor they used no light save pitchy fragments of fir wood dug out of the bog. Take a pitch splinter as big as one's finger, he explained, and it made a very good torch to carry about.

The old woman carding wanted to know if I spoke the Irish. Her tongue accommodated itself hesitatingly to English, for Gaelic is the common language of the mountains. I, of course, had to confess my linguistic inability. That I was from America seemed to me sufficient reason for my ignorance, but with her that would not pass. She knew well that Irish was talked in the States — sure! many and many had gone to the States who knew nothing else — and she was scarce able to excuse my delinquency.

The family could mention a number of relatives and former neighbors now resident in America, just as can almost every family throughout the length and breadth of the island. The Donegal emigrants, how-

ever, return to take up anew the life on the forlorn boglands with a frequency probably unequalled in any other section. I wonder that they should, for, at best, they can gain only a meagre support; but they have a deep attachment for their native soil, and I suppose they miss their customary hardships and the music of the Irish language. It is generally thought by their old neighbors that their foreign sojourn has done them no good. They do not take to the heavy manual labor as kindly as before, and they give themselves airs in their Yankee clothes. Not till every shred of these clothes is gone does the returned traveller become entirely normal, and begin to take his proper place in the bogland world.

I spent the night at Finntown's lone hotel, a big barren structure of gray stone, overlooking a little lough, beyond which rose some bleak, dark mountain ridges. The hotel depended on its bar and a small shop for a livelihood, and not on stray travellers. From the dining room window the foreground of the view was mainly composed of a stack of peat just across the road, with a generous accompaniment of rubbish. The dining room's chief articles of furniture were a dirty lounge, a few rickety chairs, and a round table covered with a scant square of oilcloth. The less said about the floor the better. On the mantel were two silent clocks. Such clocks, or those that

kept time on an erratic plan of their own, were common in Irish hotels, but I did not often find two on the same shelf.

My evening meal was hardly more prepossessing than the room. There was some questionable butter with no butter knife; a bowl of coarse-grained sugar crystals with no spoon; and bacon and eggs likewise spoonless. The single knife and fork with which I ate and the spoon which accompanied my tea were apparently considered sufficient for all purposes. The knife was of steel, with a wooden handle, and the fork of "silver" worn down to the bare metal underneath, and its tines deformed into the semblance of corkscrews. I had my doubts about the cleanliness of the dishes. Besides, the bacon was half done, dreadfully salt, and floating in grease. The tea might have been willow leaves, the hot water tasted of the bog, and, though the bread was passable and the diminutive portion of milk vouchsafed was sweet, the meal as a whole was decidedly uninviting.

The house upstairs looked like an unfinished barracks, and my chamber had sheathed walls and ceiling, paintless and wholly unornamented. The one window was uncurtained, and the floor was without a carpet or rugs. That the room was ordinarily used by some member of the hotel household seemed evident from the presence in one corner of a shrine of packing boxes,

Carding Wool

surmounted with a crockery image of the Mother Mary holding the infant Christ in her arms. A soap box at the base of the shrine projected to form a convenient kneeling place. The bed was as dubious as the rest of the hotel belongings, yet, thanks to my afternoon's tramping, I slept as well as if my surroundings had been palatial.

Rain was falling in frequent showers the next morning, and the wind blew in a chilling gale. I started out in one of the brighter intervals, but had not gone far when a fierce scud drove me to beg shelter at a wayside hovel. I might as well have gone into an ancient cave dwelling, the gloom of the interior was so deep. After all, was I in a human habitation or a henhouse? Sense of smell said the latter, though odors were somewhat mixed, and when sight returned to my at first blinded eyes this impression was strengthened. A wet, scrubby turkey stood drying and warming itself in front of the peat fire glowing low on the rude hearth. Close by, a hen was sitting in a box, and, a little more retiring, a second hen was comfortably established among the tumbled rags of a ruinous bed. On the uneven dirt floor a third hen was picking about with an industrious family of chickens, and later other hens, turkeys, and several ducks wandered in from outdoors. Even without these feathered occupants the room was distressing in its clutter and grime. Up above hung no end of

duds and wreckage, while below was a chaos of bags, peat fragments, broken furniture, farm tools, and household implements. I thought I would rather live in an American stable.

A tall tatterdemalion of a man had given me a chair. and found another for himself. From behind him a small boy in a long-sleeved coat, apparently inherited, watched me furtively. By the fireside squatted a woman knitting some coarse men's socks. Presently in a lull of the storm a barefoot little girl came noiselessly in at the door. She was not one of the household, and she crept along the wall until she reached a tiny window that looked out on the street. Then I noticed that a few dusty jars of candy and some other small wares were displayed there. The girl wanted a penny's worth of motto candy, and the boy who had gone to the window with her took down the jar she pointed out and carried it to his mother by the fireplace. The woman poured out the required amount of candies into her hand, and exchanged with the girl for the penny, and the boy carried the jar back. As he replaced it in the window, however, he slyly abstracted one of the sweets and slipped it into his mouth.

The housewife was knitting for a shopkeeper in a town "six miles over the mountain," who acted as agent for some concern in Scotland. The Scotch firm

furnished the yarn, and she got a fresh bundle at the shop as often as she finished knitting her former supply and carried the socks to be shipped to Scotland. She received for her work three halfpence a pair, and nearly always took up the money due in trade. Some of the remoter of these Donegal knitters lived fully thirty miles from the shop which gave out the work. They, as well as those who lived nearer, made the journeys to it and back on foot, with packs on their backs containing the socks or the yarn, according as they were going or returning. If it was necessary to be absent from home more than one day, they usually stayed over night with friendly wayside folk. Often they travelled in parties of ten or twelve, and in pleasant weather would only stop toward evening at some house to refresh themselves with hot tea, and then would keep on all night.

The shower which had been the occasion of my seeking shelter at length ceased, and I had left the hut and was walking along the road, when a young man overtook me and began to ask questions as to my business. My answers did not satisfy him, and it was plain he was suspicious and excited. Finally he boldly accused me of working for the government. It was of no avail to deny the charge. He was sure — he declared he had been to Australia and all over the world, and he knew! He had had his misgivings of

me as soon as I came to Finntown, and now his ill opinion was confirmed, and he would trace me!

So we parted, and I judged from the tenor of his remarks that when the tracing had been done something would happen. Later I inquired the reason for this flurry, and was told that strangers sometimes wandered among the mountains searching for valuable minerals, and that they were secretive concerning their object, or did not satisfactorily explain their actions to the understanding of the natives, who therefore have come to look on them as emissaries of the government. The peasantry have a keen antipathy to England and its rule, and these spies, as they call them, are subject to a good deal of dislike.

The Donegal folk of this particular region have had some very unfortunate encounters with governmental power, and their bitterness, whether just or not, is natural. It was in the neighboring Glen Veagh that occurred forty years ago one of the most distressing tragedies of Irish life, in its relations between landlords and tenantry, of which we have record. An estate in this glen had been recently bought by a Mr. Adair. He was, I believe, a kindly man with the best intentions as regards his treatment of his tenants, but he had the ill luck almost at once to come into collision with them. It began with his shooting on a mountain over which another landlord claimed the sporting

rights. The peasantry took sides against Mr. Adair, and regarded him as a usurper; and one day they came forth in a body to the disputed shooting-ground and turned him off.

This resulted in a series of lawsuits, and Mr. Adair was greatly irritated by the opposition he encountered and the delays in obtaining what he believed was justice. Meanwhile he had bought more property, until he owned a tract of ninety square miles, and he undertook to stock the mountains with Scotch sheep. As an outcome, the bogs were strewn with dead mutton. Accusations were brought against the tenants, and they were compelled to part with their meagre goods to pay for sheep that often, at least, had died of exposure to the weather. But Mr. Adair was convinced that the people were banded together to do him injury, and when, in the late autumn, his manager was found dead on Derry Beagh Mountain, and no evidence forthcoming to show who had committed the crime, he decided to make an example of this pestilential community.

Accordingly, the following spring, he served notices of ejectment on all the tenantry of the district. Every effort was made to dissuade him, for to exile several hundred souls so summarily from their homes, and in many cases from their only available means of livelihood, meant for them acute suffering. Mr. Adair,

however, was inflexible, and the sheriff, with two hundred police and soldiers, took up the task and spent three days in dragging men and women out of their cabins and levelling their poor huts. The evicted tenants hung about the ruins, and many of them slept for several nights on the open hillsides. Fortunately, the affair was widely noticed, and relief soon came — that which was most effectual being a proposal from one of the governments in Australia to give free passage thither to all who wished to emigrate. Most of the homeless peasants eagerly accepted this offer, and thus the episode ended. The landlord had at last triumphed, and was undisputed master of desolate and unhappy Glen Veagh.

This was a case where the harshness of the proprietor loses him all sympathy; but injustice, faults of judgment, and feelings of revenge are qualities from which the peasantry are no more free than the landlords. The difficulties and perils under which the latter labored are ably set forth by Mr. W. S. Trench, whose book I have found occasion to quote before. The antipathies existing between proprietors and tenants were most intense about half a century ago. What were known as "Ribbon Societies" then held sway far and wide, and these dark and mysterious confederacies spread terror and dismay to the hearts of both rich and poor, and did much to promote the

absenteeism of wealthy landowners, which was one of Ireland's chief sources of complaint. As fate would have it, those proprietors who were most anxious and earnest for the improvement of tenantry conditions on their estates came oftenest under the ban of the Ribbon men; while the careless, spendthrift, good-for-nothing landlord, who hunted and drank and ran in debt, and very likely collected exorbitant rents, was allowed to live in indolent peace on his domain, provided he did not interfere with the time-honored customs of subdividing, squatting, and reckless marriages.

The main object of the Ribbon Leagues was to prevent landlords, under any circumstances, from depriving a tenant of his land. The second object was to deter tenants from taking land from which other tenants had been evicted. In enforcing these two objects, numerous victims, from the titled peer to the humblest cotter, fell under the hand of the assassin.

As the Ribbon Societies were entirely secret and amenable to no laws, they did not adhere very accurately to the precise objects for which they were originally organized. By degrees they assumed the position of redressers of all wrongs, real and fancied, connected with the management of land.

The initial step in bringing their influence to bear was to send threatening notices. Their lack of judiciousness is shown by the fact that the warnings which

followed evictions were not confined to cases where it was claimed the rent was exorbitant, but were just as menacing even if the tenant had refused to pay any rent whatever.

Mr. Trench mentions seeing a notice announcing certain death to a respectable farmer because he had dismissed a careless ploughman; and employers who refused to hire laborers, approved by the local Ribbon League, were threatened in like manner. Mr. Trench himself received a letter illustrated with a coffin, in flaring red, and adorned with a death's head and cross-bones, promising the most frightful consequences to himself and family, if he did not continue in his service a profligate carpenter who had been discharged for idleness and vice.

About the year 1840 Mr. Trench was living in County Tipperary, not far from the small town of Cloghjordan. The country was very much disturbed by the wild deeds of the Ribbon men, and a tradesman with whom Mr. Trench constantly dealt had recently been barbarously murdered, as had also a local farmer. Just why these two had been singled out for punishment was not at all clear to any one outside the Leagues.

While the excitement concerning these crimes was still rife, a most daring raid was made on the home of a Mr. Hall, whose mansion was about three miles out-

Spinning with the Great Wheel

side the town. Several armed men entered his dwelling on a Sunday morning, when the male members of the family were at church, and its only occupants were the gentleman's daughters. Mr. Hall was a man of considerable fortune and the robbers expected to secure a rich booty. In response to their demand that all the money the house contained should be turned over to them, the young ladies directed the intruders to their father's iron chest. This chest the robbers lugged out to the lawn, where they tried to force it open with crowbars; but it was very strong and they did not succeed. It was too heavy for them to carry away, and its treasure, some £200, remained safe. They returned to the mansion now, and took a few stands of arms, and the leader went into the parlor and asked for liquor. His request was too late, for the young ladies, fearing the men might become dangerous if they got drink, had emptied out of the window the contents of a large flask of whiskey that stood on the side table, and there was nothing for the marauders but water. They soon departed, and then the house inmates contrived to send word of what had occurred to the church. Help presently arrived, and during the afternoon the country round about was thoroughly searched in the hope that the robbers would be captured. The quest was unsuccessful, but at night the police visited some houses of suspicious

character, and found concealed in them a number of men with blackened faces. Their clothing was stained with bog mould, and was suggestive of their having crouched in a peat cutting on the marshes while the search of the afternoon was in progress. They were arrested and brought before a magistrate, and four of them were ultimately convicted and transported beyond the seas.

Mr. Hall was a kind, amiable, and much-respected man, but after this occurrence he became exceedingly unpopular and obnoxious to the peasantry. A few months later, toward noon of a bright, sunny day in May, Mr. Trench was riding along the road in the vicinity of Mr. Hall's estate, when he heard a faint report as of a gun or a pistol at a little distance in the fields. Immediately afterward a laborer came running up a lane to meet him, saying, "Oh, sir, Mr. Hall has just been shot."

"Shot!" cried the gentleman, pulling up his horse. "Is he dead?"

"Stone dead," was the reply.

Mr. Trench rode rapidly down the lane to the scene of the tragedy, and there on the grass lay his neighbor's body lifeless, but still warm. Several other gentlemen arrived shortly, and stood about considering what was to be done. Most of them were armed and were intent on arresting the murderer, yet they were

utterly helpless, though scarcely a quarter-hour had elapsed since the fatal shot was fired. Numbers of people had been working all around planting their potatoes, and a crowd of them had gathered and were looking at the body, and feigning wonder as to who could have done the deed. Not one of them would tell who the assassin was or whither he had gone, and no trace of him could be found.

Large rewards were offered for his apprehension, and at last an accomplice turned informer and the guilty man was arrested. A great deal of attention was attracted by the trial, and it was largely attended. The informer was a dark, desperate-looking man of about forty years of age, while the prisoner was much younger, pale, slight, and without anything in his countenance to indicate ferocity or passion. The story of the informer was that he had been hired to commit the crime by a farmer on Mr. Hall's estate who had been refused some petty demand by his landlord, and had concluded, "It would be a good thing to rid the country of such a tyrant."

He gave the witness five pounds, which he shared with the prisoner, who agreed to accompany and help him. On that fatal day in May, the witness saw Mr. Hall walking in the fields with a cane in his hand. He slipped his pistol up his sleeve, and stealthily approached the unsuspecting landlord until he was

quite close. But Mr. Hall heard his footsteps, and turned round and asked what he wanted. He muttered some excuse and passed on. Again he stole up behind his victim, and again Mr. Hall discovered him, though still with no thought that his designs were unfriendly. The intending murderer, thus twice baffled, now returned to his companion, dashed the pistol on the ground, and said with an oath: "I see it's unlucky. I will have nothing more to do with it."

At this the young man called the witness a coward, took up the pistol, and declared he would use it himself. Mr. Hall had continued walking across the fields, and the murderer went straight up to him, without speaking or showing his pistol. Mr. Hall, fancying from his manner that he meant mischief, sprang back a step or two, and in so doing stumbled over a tussock and fell. That was the assassin's opportunity. Before the gentleman could get up or recover himself, the young man put the pistol close to his head and shot him dead on the spot. Then the murderer threw his weapon into an adjoining hedge and walked quietly away with his hands in his pockets to meet his accomplice, and they were in the crowd which gathered shortly about the body.

The testimony of the informer was amply corroborated, but the jury disagreed and the prisoner was re-

manded to jail. By the peasantry the result of the trial was regarded as a decided triumph, the lawlessness of the district increased, and three more murders quickly followed. But Mr. Hall's assailant was presently again tried — this time by a "Special Commission" — and he was convicted. Two weeks later he was executed, and for a long time afterward Tipperary was quiet.

I only stayed at Finntown over one night, and at noon, shortly after my encounter with the man who was going to trace me, I engaged a place on the Dunglow jaunting-car. It was almost as heavily loaded as the day before, and three of the passengers were women. We were a good while in getting started from the station, for there were many articles of luggage to be packed away and tied on, and the driver had a good deal of small business to transact with the station master. The showers kept descending every few minutes, and in one of these, a ragged old woman, with a bag about her head in place of a shawl, and with her feet bound up in some pieces of homespun, climbed over a wall from the bog and addressed the occupants of the jaunting-car. She pulled back her sleeves and showed several scars on her arms which she said were dog bites, and one of the women passengers who, from the fact that she wore a hat, I judged was better-to-do than the others, gave the beggar a half-

penny. This was accepted thankfully, with voluble prayers for the bestowal on the giver of blessings of all sorts; and if these materialized, they were certainly cheaply had at the price.

At length we were off, pursuing a winding road up and down an endless succession of rocky hills, with the boglands frowning around in every direction. We were assailed by frequent windy scuds of rain, but there were spells between, when the clouds broke and the sunshine stole over the wet moors, and the rainbows arched the distance. It was a lonely land — a few grazing cows and sheep, farms at long intervals with their tiny, stone-walled fields and lowly dwellings, now and then a stream dark with the bog stain, many little lakes in the hollows, and never a bush or a tree, save occasional stunted and storm-beaten ones near the farmhouses. We sometimes met a barefoot woman, and once stopped to help a man with an overloaded cart whose horse had come to an exhausted stop in climbing a long, steep hill. Our driver and the two men passengers on the jaunting-car alighted, and by pushing behind, we got the stranded horse and cart into motion again. The assistance rendered by my fellow traveller was, I fancy, more willing than effective. His familiarity with the whiskey bottle was very evident, and his hands were so unsteady he could hardly light his pipe. As we journeyed he swayed

The Haymakers

limply backward and forward with the jolts of the car, and I was much afraid at first he would tumble off. Later, I was afraid he wouldn't; for he was a nuisance with his rambling, unceasing talk, and his drunken determination that the passengers should all exactly understand his opinions of matters and things.

About the middle of the afternoon we reached Dunglow, where I found an excellent hotel; but the place itself was a dreary coast town, and I did not feel like lingering in it. There was little traffic, and the passing to and fro on the chief street was mainly confined to a few carts engaged in conveying seaweed for fertilizer from the shore to the farmlands behind the village. I ought also to mention an old man, who was being stoned by some small boys. He had a pail in either hand, and made several visits to a stream that ran through the town, filled his pails, and then bore them slowly away to his home. He was short and stooping, and too stiff and aged to give chase to his persecutors, and, encumbered by his pails, his only resource was angry threats and rumblings of wrath, which pleased the lads the more.

The next morning I went back with the car halfway to Finntown, to a little place called Doochary, where I engaged lodgings with a bankrupt innkeeper. The barroom was officially sealed up, but I got the impression that neither the landlord nor his patrons

went wholly dry on that account. There was a closet or inner room to which he and they retired when there was occasion, and whence they reappeared with a suspicious cheerfulness and a telltale moisture about their mouths. The people among the hills do not acquiesce willingly in government control of the liquor business, and they evade the law in more ways than one — most often perhaps by illicit manufacture. When you see on an early morning far off across the apparently deserted bogs a wisp of smoke arising, it is not unlikely that marks the place of a still. Drinkers say that a glass of "potheen," as the outlawed whiskey is called, is worth a pint of such stuff as they get in the towns. They can always tell it by its smoky taste, and by a slight catching in the throat, produced partly by the conditions under which it is made, and partly by its comparative newness — for the bogland "shebeens" have not facilities for keeping their liquor as long as the ripening really requires.

The drive from Dunglow had been a chilly one, with fog and showers, and I sought the hotel kitchen and sat down by the turf fire. A barefoot girl was puttering around doing the housework, and later a barefoot old woman came in and seated herself on a low stool beside the fireplace opposite me. Then she got out a short clay pipe and began to smoke, and I was glad to escape to an apartment upstairs where dinner

had been made ready for me. This room did its best to attain a suggestion of elegance by having its windows draped with lace curtains (soiled and somewhat torn) and its floor adorned with a carpet and several goat-skin rugs that imparted their own peculiar flavor to the stuffy atmosphere.

My sleeping-place was in an adjoining chamber — a sort of closet opening off a narrow hall, with no windows and no daylight save what came in across the hall when the door was ajar. Nearly all the floor space was monopolized by the bed and a chair with a washbowl on it. The hall too had its peculiarities, especially in the matter of illumination; for it was customary to temper its evening gloom with the light of a lone little candle set on a window sill in a hardened puddle of its own grease dripped there for the purpose, and serving instead of a candlestick.

Doochary consisted of a few whitewashed two-story houses in a group by a little river of hurrying, roily water. Heaps of ashes and manure, the wreck of a cart and other rubbish, bestrewed the wayside in the village centre. Extreme poverty seemed evident, yet I noticed that a beggar who made a tour of the place, going to each house-door in turn with a business-like impartiality and precision, was by no means unsuccessful. The beggar was an old man in patched and faded clothing that looked historic. Though past

his prime, he was still vigorous and, as one of the villagers remarked, "betther able to work than some o' thim here that's tryin' to keep a wee holdin'." The villager used a Scotch expression in his comment, and I often heard Scotch terms used all through Donegal, in spite of the fact that the people are purely Irish. The explanation is that they get these words from contact with the Scotch in the richer farming country to the east, and in Scotland itself, to which great numbers make annual pilgrimages to work during the corn and potato harvest.

One thing I regret having missed in my Donegal journeyings was the Doon Well, famed far and wide for its miraculous cures. It is not by any means the only well of healing in Ireland, but is at present, I believe, the most notable. Its situation is peculiarly secluded. The nearest town is Kilmacrenan, from which it is about three miles distant off on a waste of moorland. There you find it, roughly roofed with stones, on a level green space under the shadow of a rude bluff. A rivulet trickles away from it, and on the bank by the streamside, at some remove from the well, the pilgrims sit to take off their shoes and wash their feet; for you must go to the fount barefooted.

But the most interesting adjunct of the well is a group of crutches thrust into the sod and left standing there by persons who have come crippled and gone

away restored and sound. The sight is the more picturesque and touching because the crutches are swathed in rags — rags that the cripples have worn in sickness, and which long exposure to the weather has cleansed and softened to tints that are in pleasing harmony with the surrounding landscape.

The healing virtues of the well are not limited to those who visit it and drink of its water on the spot, and the pilgrims nearly all fill bottles to carry away with them, either for further use of their own or for ailing friends. The ground itself is consecrated, and the prayers offered at the well are believed to be specially effective, even where loved ones far across the sea are made their subject. No record of cures is kept at this humble resort, and how many are benefited is uncertain; but the Irish peasants are excellent subjects for faith-healing, and cures, more or less lasting, are undoubtedly numerous.

What I saw of the Irish Highlands after leaving Doochary was not essentially different in scenery or people from that already described. There were the same bogs and sombre loughs and stony mountains, and the same low cabins and tiny fields. Small holdings, subdivided by family inheritance for centuries, are the rule, the majority of them under fifteen acres. The land is too poor for the peasants to more than eke out a miserable existence in the best of times on

such holdings, and when the crops fail, there is great distress. Yet, under ordinary circumstances, so keen is the demand for land, that from twenty to thirty pounds is readily obtained for the tenant rights of one of these little bogland farms. The rentals vary from five shillings to three or four pounds. This simply pays for the use of the land. The tenants themselves, after the custom almost universal in Ireland, must erect their own houses, put up their own fences, and do all their own draining and reclaiming; and then, when a man has, by his personal exertions, increased the value of his holding, the rent is very likely raised.

Still, not all landlords are extortionate, nor are all peasants unsophisticated and unequal to the task of coping with the landowners and their agents. It is said that many farmers do all in their power to appear poor; that they come to pay their rent in their worst clothes, and are careful beforehand to get their bank-notes changed into small silver, hoping the possession of only sixpences and shillings will give such an appearance of difficulty in getting the money together, as to gain credence for their assertions of poverty. Then, with the whole amount due in their pockets, they try to get the agent to accept half. The case has two sides, doubtless, and both parties have their troubles, and neither is wholly fair to the other.

One thoughtful observer, with whom I talked, said that the greatest evil with which the peasantry have to contend is not their hard surroundings or the rents, but their tendency to run into debt at the shops. He regarded the shops as encouragers of extravagance. They have multiplied, until now they are scattered all over the country, and are too easily accessible to the people, who buy foolish luxuries and squander on trinkets and unnecessaries, and live beyond their means. They purchase on credit, and many do not know what they really owe, and do not dare to ask. They are timid in the presence of the shopman, who has them in his power, and they buy without saying anything of price, only intent on getting the things to satisfy their immediate desires. When the boys and girls come home in November from service on the lowland farms, and the men and young women return from Scotland, their wages in part pay the rent, but in larger part go to the shopkeepers. Then the accounts begin to grow again, and if any balance is carried over, a high rate of interest is charged.

The people live largely on what they raise — potatoes, cabbages, and turnips — but most of them purchase flour, a small quantity at a time, and bake it into bread. Tea, likewise, has of late years become a household necessity for old and young. They use fish to a considerable extent, and now and then indulge

in a bit of bacon. When the potatoes are gone, the poorer folk buy "Injun" meal, and the more prosperous get oatmeal. The porridge is eaten with milk ordinarily, but if the cows are not giving milk, or if no cows are owned, the porridge is eaten "dry." Some farmers keep as many as eight or ten cows, but they are not high grade beasts, and a bogland cow only gives "about as much as a good goat." Surplus butter is sold to carts which make frequent trips through the region picking up produce in exchange for groceries. The carts take practically all the eggs and poultry, as well as the butter, for the farmers rarely eat eggs, and only sacrifice a hen or a duck for the home table at Christmas or for Easter Sunday. Even when a pig is slaughtered, nearly all of it is sold except the liver.

As a rule, the poultry are domiciled in rude little huts built in handy nooks close about the house. These are dark and windowless, only three or four feet high, and not much deeper or broader, with sides of stone and roofs of sod or thatch. Where the poultry share the dwelling with the family, a place is usually slatted off for their night quarters at the end of the kitchen, but sometimes roosts are put up immediately inside the entrance, high enough to be out of the way. The cabin door is apt to be in two halves, and when the upper half is open and the lower shut, which is ordinarily the case from early morning until sundown, the

hens find the arrangement very convenient in assisting them to mount to their roosting place after their day's foraging. It is not much trouble to flap up to the half door, and then the rest of the flight to the roosts is easily completed.

Life on the Donegal moorlands is much the same from year to year. It is a day-to-day struggle, and the prospect never attains much brightness. Yet the Highlanders are an independent race and do not ask for charity. To me they seemed hardy and industrious to an unusual degree; and I could not but regret that the conditions of their homeland were not more favorable.

VIII

PEASANT LIFE IN CONNEMARA

AS compared with the other divisions of Britain, Ireland has a run-down, out-at-the-heels look that is depressing. Both the country districts and the towns show marked signs of dilapidation, decay, and thriftlessness. There are broken walls and litter in the neighborhood of all the villages and cities, and the land commonly has the appearance of being tilled neither energetically nor carefully.

I was more than ever impressed by this aspect of melancholy in an August trip I made across the Island from Dublin to Galway. The country, as seen from the car window, was uniformly flat, and much of it was bogland — wide, brown, unfenced grazing wastes with black stacks of peat scattered over them, and dark pools gleaming in the cuttings. Now and then there

were places in the bogs where the heather grew in great masses of pink bloom; but it was only in patches, and never covered acres and miles as on the Highland moors of Scotland.

I travelled third class, and though that gave me a chance to see more of life than in one of the better apartments, the discomfort was rather greater than I anticipated. In England the average third-class carriage, in spite of its being very plain and boxy, is quite satisfactory for a ride of moderate length. But in Ireland it is entirely cushionless, and the men smoke and spit with the most barbaric freedom. The people were, however, lively and talkative, and almost without exception were good-natured and accommodating. They were much inclined to excitement at the stations, and there was always a commotion and a scramble to get hold of the baggage as it was unloaded from the van.

A tendency to loiter till the last moment on the platform was manifest among intending travellers, and when the train prepared to start the guard had to cry, "Take your sates!" vehemently, to get the passengers on board.

At one place several girls entered my apartment, and an old man, who was seeing them off and giving them all sorts of directions, presently bethought himself to step to the lunch room and buy some ginger beer for

a treat. He came back with a bottle and a glass just as the conductor was slamming the doors and warning everybody to get on. That put the old gentleman in a flurry, and when he tried to pour the beer he did not hold the bottle right, and the glass ball in the neck kept rolling down and stopping the passage, so that with each attempt he only got a few drops. The train began to move, and one of the girls snatched bottle and glass. She was more successful in her pouring, but the old gentleman was reaching in at the window in great turmoil to get the things back.

"Here," said the girl, handing out the bottle, "I'll give you that, anyway."

"The glass, the glass too!" cried the old man, now breaking into a trot to keep pace with the accelerating speed of the train.

After taking one more hasty gulp the girl relinquished the glass, and then to our surprise the train slowed up sharply and came to a standstill. We had made a false start — been switching or something of that sort — and we had only gone a few rods. In a moment the old gentleman was at the window, panting, with beads of perspiration on his forehead. He handed in the glass and the bottle again, and the girls finished the beverage at their leisure. The passengers were all much pleased over the performance, especially a man with a bottle of his own sticking out the inside pocket

MOWING

of his coat. "Ah," said he, "sure, we'd be nearly arrivin' at Galway now if it wasn't for your drinkin'!"

We passed many little, gray, stone towns along our route, and now and then a ruined tower or castle. The cottages that I saw from the car window were small, with whitewashed walls, thatched roofs, and a good deal of filth and rubbish about the yards. In the fields were numerous cattle feeding, goats and geese were common, and donkeys, the national beasts of burden, popularly believed to be equal to anything, and to be able to live on air if occasion demands, were omnipresent. The fields were pleasantly green, and looked fairly fertile, and a most attractive touch was bestowed on the landscape by the old hedgerows. These were at this season just maturing their fruit — little hawthorn apples with so strong a reddish tinge as to give the bushes the appearance of being full of bright blossoms.

At Galway I stayed over night. It is a battered old town, with many lofty stone warehouses in the business section, but a large fraction of these were grimly vacant, and the place did not look as if it was thriving. A few years ago there was hope of rejuvenating it by making it the terminus of a line of Atlantic greyhounds. The harbor furnished a fine anchorage, and the port is nearer New York than any other in Europe. The passage would be eight hours shorter than to Queenstown, and the mail expenses would be

materially reduced. A million dollars were spent in jetties, quays, docks, and basins, but the entrance to the harbor is difficult, and the loss of a large steamer which struck a forgotten reef and foundered in sight of the town damped all enthusiasm, and, except for a few small emigrant ships, Galway has as little sea traffic as ever.

In ancient times the port was much frequented by merchants from Spain, with which country it had a considerable commerce. The town still retains architectural peculiarities, due to the old-time Spanish influence — houses decorated with fantastic, weather-worn carvings, and buildings that have a court in the centre with a gateway opening into the street. Perhaps the most interesting reminiscence of the past, to the stranger, is that recalled by a tablet on the wall of St. Nicholas Churchyard commemorating the "stern and unbending justice" of James Lynch Fitz-Stephen, who was mayor of the city some four hundred years ago. A son had conspired with the crew of a ship in which he was returning from a voyage, to murder the captain and convert the property to their own use. For this crime the son was tried and condemned to death by his father, the mayor. The young man had numerous friends, and they laid their plans to go enmass and intercede for him, but the father learned of their intentions, and lest their pleadings should swerve him

from fulfilling the demands of the law, he caused the condemned man to be executed before their arrival. When they approached the house they saw the son's lifeless body dangling from one of the windows.

Down by the shore of Galway Bay, on the outskirts of the city, live the fishing folk in a community by themselves. Their houses are whitewashed cabins, with thatch roofs, and the inhabitants are purely Celtic, clinging to the Irish language and to antiquated customs and costumes. They elect their own chief magistrate or "King" yearly, and although under the same municipal rule as the rest of the city, they acknowledge the authority of their king as supreme in regard to many of their affairs. While I was loitering in their village, I made the acquaintance of a boy carrying a scrawny black kitten. He was all in tatters from head to foot, but he was entirely unconscious of his attire, and was wholly cheerful. "It is me own cat," he said, referring to the creature in his arms; "and, bedad, it runned away yisterday, and sure, I have hunted the town all over, till to-day I found it."

The lad looked as if he had gone through as many trials in his quest of rescue as any knight of the old legends. He was going on to relate these in detail, when a woman coming down the street hailed him. She was apparently his mother, for she spoke with authority. "Will you come home, thin?" said she, and she picked

up a stone and threw it, to show him she meant business. We both dodged, and in haste parted company.

From Galway I went by rail northward into a much more rugged region than any I had seen in the journey across the island. The bogs bordered desolate lakes, and the stony Connemara Mountains rose in ragged outlines. This railroad on the west coast had been built only a year, and it gave easy access to a district where the Irish peasant could be seen unaffected by the march of modern improvement. Not that the life there is exceptional; for what is true of Connemara, is just as true of many other parts of Ireland, and even in the sections most favored the peasant life is exceedingly primitive, and the home surroundings dubiously poverty-stricken.

I left the train at a place called Recess, and found myself on the platform of a lonely little station in the midst of a bog. No houses were in sight, but a man with a jaunting-car took me aboard, and raced his horse for a hotel a mile away, as if he was going to a fire. I hung on for dear life, and was thankful when I alighted without mishap.

At the hotel — a whitewashed stone building in a little wood on the edge of a lough — I was welcomed by a slick waiter, with an expansive shirt-bosom, and a posy in his buttonhole. He gave one the impression that the hotel was a very high-toned establish-

The Humblest Home in Ireland

ment; but the interior was rather forlorn, nevertheless, with its stained and out-of-date wall-paper, its decrepit furniture, and an odor that suggested a need of scrubbing and renovation.

Soon after I arrived it was announced that the table d'hôte dinner was ready, and about fifteen people gathered around the long dining room table. Most of them were persons touring, who were just stopping at Recess for a day or so. They would indulge in the exertion of a mountain climb, would walk or ride to several spots in the neighborhood that were recommended as interestingly picturesque, and then be off to do the same at the next place. But there were two men at the head of the table whose stay was less fitful. They had come for the fishing, and every morning they went off to toil on the windy loughs, rowing up and down, and up and down, all day, through sunshine and showers, and heat and cold. At dusk they returned with the local peasants who had been with them to do the pulling at the oars, and they were met at the hotel door by the women of their respective families with the question, "What luck?"

Neither man caught more than three or four fish as a rule in any one day, and as they had to pay roundly for the fishing privilege, the fish often cost them half a guinea or more apiece. They had a good deal to say about their experiences, but it had very much of a same-

ness, I thought, and the most entertaining incident I heard related was of a rainy day when one of the boats neglected to carry along anything with which to bail out the water, and a rower had taken off a shoe and made that serve the purpose. I failed to see any pleasure in spending two months, as these men had, in that lonely spot fishing those solemn loughs.

The dining room was a curious combination of fine intentions and shabbiness. The floor was uneven, and the doors and windows were warped, and had to be wrestled with whenever the attempt was made to either open or close them. At one end of the room stood a piano, but it was badly marred and out of tune. The table linen was dirty, the sugar bowls were pewter, and the knives and forks were rude and much worn. In the daytime a number of hornets were buzzing about and disputing the possession of the jam with the guests. But as an antidote to these flaws and imperfections there was our waiter with his starched linen and a flower in his buttonhole, and there were the fine big bouquets set along the middle of the table, and there were the trout, freshly caught and beyond criticism.

The day following that on which I reached Recess was Sunday, and at breakfast I asked the waiter where I could attend service. He said there was no church anywhere near, but that the people went to mass every

other Sunday at a farmhouse a mile down the road. This was the alternate Sunday, and service would begin at nine o'clock in the morning. I started as soon as breakfast was over and, warned that I would be late by the intermittent running along the road of three women who passed me, I walked rapidly. When I approached the farmhouse I could hear the monotonous voice of the priest going through the service in the kitchen. The door was open and I could see that the room was packed with kneeling worshippers. But the house interior could not accommodate all who had come, and in the yard were thirty or forty persons more. They gathered as near as they could conveniently get to the doorway, and knelt like their fellow-worshippers inside. The yard was narrow and grassless, and entirely open to the highway. On one side of it were a number of jaunting-cars with their shafts tipped up skyward, and, tied to the walls of a neighboring stable, was a saddled pony.

I felt a little doubtful as to how to deport myself, and I took my place on the outskirts of the open air portion of the congregation near the carts, whence, through the single small kitchen window, I sometimes caught a glimpse of the priest in his white robes. The service was an hour long, and most of that time the people were on their knees. The yard was rough, and not over-and-above neat, and the worshippers got down on its

grit and stones with reluctance and caution, evidently picking out the softer and cleaner spots. Sometimes a man would ease a kneepan by putting under it his red bandana or his cap. A part of the time he would be down on one knee, then he would change to the other, then get down on both. One old man, with bushy gray whiskers sticking out from under his chin in a prehistoric semicircle, found even these changes insufficient, and now and then would get down on all fours. In that posture he looked very like a monstrous toad.

The sounds of the priest's voice came to us outside indistinct and confused, and the people in the yard apparently kneeled and rose in unison with a man next the door who had a better opportunity to hear than the rest, and who occasionally peeked inside. The open air devotees were not specially attentive. Their eyes were constantly wandering to me or to each other, and their hands kept up a lively rubbing and slapping in a losing warfare with the abounding midges.

At one point the priest came to the threshold, and the outdoor worshippers all hurried into a huddled group about him, while he threw holy water on them. He did the job by wholesale, using a stick with a swab on the end. This swab he dipped into a bowl that he held in his left hand, and then made sudden flings this way and that out on the audience, the members of which would keep up an awkward hopping movement,

Harvest Time

as if in an ecstatic eagerness to feel some of the precious drops trickling over them.

When the service ended the congregation straggled off, some up the road, some down, some following paths across the bogs, and a few lingering in the yard to visit. A young fellow mounted the saddled horse, and other horses were brought from the stable and hitched into the jaunting-cars. Such men as had a team would light their pipes as soon as they finished hitching up, then would start the horse and clamber up to the seat from either side, just as the creature was breaking into a trot. This hit-or-miss tumbling on looked reckless to me, but its spice of gymnastic unconventionality seemed to just suit the Irish nature.

I chose to make a detour in returning to my hotel, and went off on a bog road that led to a straggling group of four or five cottages. The road grew more crooked and narrow and fuller of ledges and loose stones with each house I passed, till it conducted me into the barnyard of a final dwelling and stopped. But I climbed over the wall and went on across the water-soaked barren of the bog. My route was one of frequent zigzags, to avoid the spots that looked wettest and softest, but in spite of all my care in jumping from grass-tuft to grass-tuft, I could not avoid getting wet feet. I thought I knew just how to cut across the bog to my hotel, but the heaving surface of the marsh

was so uniformly sober and so without mark of tree or stone that as soon as I lost sight of the hamlet through which I had passed, I was confused and had naught to guide me but a general idea of direction. I went on thus for some time, and then came to a lonely little ruin. It was a single small building with walls still entire. The roof was there, too, but it had fallen down within the walls at one end.

At first glance I took it for granted that the place was deserted, yet a closer approach revealed a potato patch by the door, and wisps of smoke were streaking up from the peak of the gable that had not yet parted company with the thatch. I was about to look in at the open door when two cows walked out. A third stood inside chewing her cud. She turned her head and regarded me with mild-eyed interest. It was a curious apartment, with the half-fallen roof high at one end and slanting down to the floor at the other. By chance the rafters had so dropped that the thatch remained complete, or else it had been made weather-proof where it lay, by adjusting and patching. Against the farther wall were set two chairs, and above them was a shelf holding a few dishes, and there was a little fireplace with some fragments of peat smouldering on the hearth. Otherwise the room looked like a rude stable. The house had one tiny window, but even that was unglazed, and was just a

square hole in the wall. No doubt it was stuffed with sedge in bad weather — that is, if this really was a human habitation. But I saw neither man, woman, nor child, and came away wondering. Did those three cows keep house there on the remote bogland unbeknown to every one, after the manner of animals in the fairy tales, or was it all a dream?

I continued for some distance over the bog, in what I judged was the direction of my hotel, and was beginning to fear I had gone hopelessly astray, when I espied a boy on donkey-back riding across the waste. I called and beckoned to him, and he stopped and waited till I came up. In response to my questions he told me where to find a path that would lead me back to civilization, and I left him seated stock-still on his donkey, twisted half around, gaping at me as if I was beyond his comprehension. But after the space of a minute or two I noticed he had slipped off his creature's back and was searching in the bog. Then he remounted with something in his hand, and came cantering along awkwardly in my wake to offer me, in the hope of a tip, a sprig of white heather he had picked. White heather is comparatively rare, and besides, it has a touch of romantic interest; for if a lover presents to his lady a bouquet of it, she understands that he has in a delicate way proposed marriage. I gave the boy a bit of silver, and then it occurred to me to

inquire about the little ruin of a house back on the bog.

"Oh," he said, "that's the house of an ould body by the name o' Mary McCarty, and sure, here comes hersilf, now."

A barefoot woman with a colored handkerchief tied about her head was approaching. She greeted the boy familiarly when she came near, and asked him, with a good deal of angry and distressed perturbation, if he had seen any of "thim villains" who had been stealing her hay. It seemed she had mowed a little piece near her cabin with her hand sickle, and while she was away some men had come — "the nagurs! and they got two loads off from me — as much as they could carry on their backs."

The crime was all the blacker because she had no one but herself to "depind on." She lived alone in the hut, save that with her in the tiny broken-roofed apartment were housed her three cows. The bit of land she cultivated and the cows barely kept her from starvation. Then, too, she did not know when the house would be down on her head.

"Many's the time," said she, "in a storrum, when in fear of me life I have gone out and stayed in the open sandpit at the back till the storrum was over. Ah, it is a poor place, sir, and sure, there's no worse in all Erin!"

GETTING OUT PEAT

And it seemed to me then, as it does now, in recalling all I have seen of the Irish cabins in various parts of the island, that she was right.

When we parted, the woman and boy went away in company across the bogland desolation, and I kept along a vague path that led me in time to several houses straggling along a steep slope, at the foot of which flowed a little river. The single village lane, with a tiny rivulet trickling among its stones, was about as much like the bed of a brook as it was a roadway, and whenever there was a heavy rain it must have contained a torrent. I followed the lane through the house dooryards until I met an old man driving two cows up to their pasturage on the moor. He stopped me, apparently for the express purpose of imparting the information that he was one hundred years old. With his lean figure, his faded eyes, and his loose-hung chin covered with gray stubble, he looked as old as he said he was, but driving cows seemed a rather sprightly occupation for a centenarian.

I asked him how I should get to my hotel, and when, with some difficulty, he got his mind off his age and concentrated on this new topic, he led me to a knoll a little higher up, and pointed out the hotel's white walls a half mile distant on the other side of the river in the hollow. He said I could cross the stream by some stepping-stones "down be-

yant." I descended the hillside to the spot indicated, but the stones, though they made what would be a fair crossing for a goat, or the barefooted natives, were too unstable for a Christian used to bridges. Some children had followed me from the village, after the manner of their kind, and were watching my hesitation with interest. From them I learned that there were better stepping-stones farther up.

I kept along the marshy shores, over walls, through briers and sloughs, with now and then a pause to pick some of the luscious blackberries that abounded. Far up above sat a man on a boulder smoking his pipe, and meditatively watching me, but when he noted presently that I was having difficulty in getting through a thorny hedge, down he came to my assistance and broke aside the bushes. Then he led the way across several little fields to the stepping-stones, and went skipping over them with a nimbleness that was far beyond my abilities. He said the water often came up and covered the stones clean out of sight.

"How do you cross, then?" I asked.

"We have to wade it, bedad!" was the response. "Thim as hasn't a harsey to ride, is the worst aff—for, sure, sir, thim that is on foot go through the wather at the danger of their lives."

It was a relief to get across the stream, and it was a

relief to escape from the bog, and I was heartily glad when I reached my hotel, thoroughly tired, hungry, and belated.

On the evening of the day following I went for another bogland walk, up a long hillocky slope near the hotel. The earth was spongy and yielding. A mass of moss overspread its surface, intermingled with scanty and unthrifty grasses, clumps of heather, and a scattering of reeds. Here and there the moor was brightened with touches of delicate yellow green, but the general tone was brownish and sombre. Frequent gray boulders thrust up into view. These became more numerous as the land rose higher, till I climbed a ridge where the soil was thin and strewn everywhere with shattered rock. Beyond this ridge was a little huddle of houses with an accompaniment of tiny stone-walled fields running down into a green valley. The houses were low, and their walls and thatched roofs were dark colored, and so like the surrounding bog that they seemed not the work of human beings, but some huge mushroom growths of nature. Not a tree was in sight, nor anything related to a tree, save a few little osier beds in the garden patches, and these osiers were quite inconspicuous, for they were cut off periodically to furnish wands for weaving creels.

As soon as I began to descend the ridge, a barefoot woman with a shawl over her head and a big baby in

her arms came hurrying to me from an outlying cabin of the village. She arrived breathless, and thrust a bit of green marble into my hand, and called down blessings on my head in her fervent jargon. All this was intended to soften my heart and coax forth a tip. She told with pride how fond the little "Pat" in her arms was of money — how if he saw strangers coming, he would run to her and say, "Gentlemens! gentlemens! come and get money."

When any one gave him a bit he would say, "Thank God, I've got my money."

He was two years old, but she said he made her carry him everywhere she went. Even if she had a big sack of peat on her back, she must take him along under one arm. Once, she said, she gave him a little flat stone and tied it in the corner of a handkerchief, and he carried it about in his bosom all day and called it his money.

Rough, narrow, stone-walled lanes, crooked and rocky, connected cottages. Blackberry bushes, thickly dotted with ripe fruit, straggled over the walls. I thought it a wonder, in such a starved-looking community where there were plenty of children, that the berries were left to ripen. All through that region blackberries were plenty and delicious, but few were ever picked in consequence of an old superstition that they are a cause of cholera. This belief is still rife

An Inspector of Streets

among the Irish peasants. But I, ignorant of the dire possibilities that lay in the berries, picked and ate wherever I went.

While thus engaged in a village lane, a young man approached me, said, "Good evening to your honor," and jumped over a wall and snapped off some choice clusters for me. After that he walked about in my company, a self-constituted guide. But he was a quick, intelligent fellow, and I did not object. His name was Michael. Just above the village was a quarry, and many great blocks of stone, curiously grained and colored, were lying round about. This quarry had been a short-lived experiment, and was not worked now. Michael said it had given employment to a number of the village men, and they were paid half a crown a day, while some men that were "brought from away earned as much as five shillings, sir — they did, sir!"

Now there was no employment to be had in the neighborhood. The villagers could only work their little farms or leave. About all the young men and young women went away to the towns or to America. Michael had two brothers in Boston. They did not write what they were doing, but every year they sent home some money to "the ould man," his father.

The rents of these little farms were from two to six

pounds. Each cottager grew a little field of oats, another of potatoes, another of grass, and some raised patches of cabbages or turnips. The crops were grown mostly on the thin-soiled, stony hillsides. If a man took a field in the meadow below, his neighbors thought he was too well off, and accused him of an inclination to put on airs and ape the aristocracy. Besides all this, it added an extra pound to the rent. Most of the people kept two or three cows, several sheep, and a few hens. In some cases they owned a pony or a goat or a flock of geese. There were also two half-grown pigs that frequented the village lanes. They were sharp-nosed, long-legged creatures, nimble of foot, and apparently capable, in their wanderings, of picking up their own living. When at home they lived in their master's house. This house had but a single room, and the pig-pen was in one corner. Aside from the pigs, the family was composed of a man and wife and three or four children. Their abode was windowless, and light came in only through the two doors and possible chinks in the walls.

Michael said that in old times they used to keep the pigs under the bed, but they did not do so in this village of Lisouter, nowadays. The people sold their poultry at the hotel, and other produce they took to market at the nearest town. Potatoes, of course, stood chief on their bill of fare, as they do among

the Irish peasantry everywhere. Some occasionally indulged in mutton, and most families had oatmeal frequently. Now and then they bought fish, and bacon was more or less familiar; but many of them never knew the taste of beef.

The oats raised are fed out to the stock, and the oatmeal for house use is bought, a bagful at a time. Flour is purchased in the same way, and bread is baked in a flat kettle on the hearth. Very little butter or cheese is made, and what little milk the poorly fed cows give is drunk with the potatoes and oatmeal. Since the railroad came, tea has become a family necessity, and all the eggs the hens lay go in exchange for it.

About the only farm tools to be found in Lisouter are spades — primitive, narrow-bladed, and one-sided, but apparently effective. No such contrivance as a plough has ever been seen in the village. The people dig their fields over by hand. Potatoes are planted in rows that are nearly three feet wide, known as "drills," and the space between each drill and the one next it is dug out like a ditch and serves for drainage. The potato tops grow in a spindling jungle on the drills, much too close together to do well. Crops are not rotated, but are grown over and over on the same ground, and are never what they might be. Often the potatoes fail to come up except scatteringly, in which

case cabbage plants are set to fill out the blanks. This year had been wetter than usual, and the "blight had come on the p'taties too early," so that it seemed likely the Lisouter folk would go on short rations before the next harvest time.

Michael and I ascended a crag at the rear of the hamlet to get a view. Several of the village children tagged after all the way, taking turns at begging. "Please give me a copper, sir — only one, sir," they said; and refusals had no effect whatever on them. One boy of eight, still in skirts, had a baby on his back — a solemn, watchful baby that never let out a sound. The boy did not seem to mind his burden, but clambered everywhere the others did. These shoeless children were sure-footed and nimble, and they skipped about the rocky hillside like wild creatures of the bog. I went high up to where I could look down on the long stretches of dreary marshlands that are omnipresent in the region, spotted and linked all over by the loughs, large and small. Far away in the west I could catch a gleam of the sea, while in the near landscape the mountain crags were darkling, and in the hollow close below were the hovels of Lisouter and their little patchwork of varicolored fields. On the way back through the village a stout, fairly well-dressed young man got off the wall where he had been loafing, and came hulking after me. "Please, sir, give

me the price of an ounce of tobacco," he said. The children beggars followed me far down the hill. Begging seemed to be constitutional with the Connemara peasantry, and I always had a persistent group in my wake every time I visited Lisouter.

When I approached the village a day or two afterward, a woman came hurrying across two or three fields with a bundle of cloth on her arm, and greeted me with, "Good marnin', sir, an' sure it's a fine marnin,' sir."

Then she spread out the cloth along with a few coarse socks and urged me to buy. "Plaze, sir," she said, "buy the friz, for the love o' God and a poor woman who's lost her b'y an' pit him in the grave only five weeks past."

She went on to tell me that she had borrowed the money for the boy's burial from a poor neighbor woman who must be paid now, and she with nothing to pay. Her husband after the funeral had gone far away to get work, "but he soon come back, for there were a big weight on his heart, and he could eat nothing at all, at all." She spoke of her eight children — "Four of 'em I've given to God, and four of 'em's alive — God bless 'em."

I went across the fields to her cottage, squatted among the stony patches of oats and potatoes. Like the rest of the Lisouter cabins, its stone walls were

loosely chinked with peat. Roofs were of sedge tied on with straw ropes thickly drawn over and fastened to pegs under the eaves or to stones hung along the edges. The thatch was renewed every year. It would last two if new ropes were put on each time, but few would do that. The chimneys were insignificant, and hardly showed above the roofs. Peat was the only fuel burned. It all came from the bog, a sack at a time, on the women's backs. The Lisouter folk never saw coal till some was brought for use in an engine at the quarry. Then they thought it was rock, and it was a great wonder to them that the stuff burned. Most never saw a railroad till the local one was put through, the year before. As soon as it was finished they all must ride; but when it came to getting aboard, they felt they were taking their lives in their hands, and at the start the old women were all jumping up and screaming they would be murdered and their friends would never see them any more.

The woman with the cloth to sell showed me into her cottage. The door was low, and I had to stoop to enter. She hunted up a level place on the dirt floor, and set out a chair for me. A dim fire burned among the rough stones of the fireplace, and sent a little smoke up the chimney and a great deal of smoke out into the room. The kitchen was full of flies, and it had the odor of a stable. The floor was much littered

Journeying on Foot

with heather and rushes that had been brought in to bed the cow and calf that had a home in one end of the kitchen. On some tattered blankets thrown over a heap of sedge near the fireplace two of the children slept. The rest of the family had a bedroom beyond a thin partition.

My hostess, in the midst of her talk with me, pulled a short pipe from her pocket and made much mourn that she had no tobacco to fill it. She said a smoke was very comforting. "It's loike medicine to me."

My former guide, Michael, had come up to the cottage, and was talking outside with some of the beggar children. The woman saw him and sent out her ragged little girl, Bridget, to "borrow the loan of the pipe" he was smoking. Michael relinquished his pipe readily, and as the woman whiffed she blessed him again and again. When I left, she blessed me likewise, saying, "Long life to ye! An' may your journey home be better than the one over. God bless ye, an' give ye a safe crossin'!"

In a cabin a little farther up the hill lived a woman all alone. She was still young and not unattractive. Her husband had gone to America, and he would have taken her with him, but she would not leave. A letter had come from him only the week before in which he sent £3, and the villagers thought that was doing pretty well. Her cottage was hedged in by great

growths of nettles that flourished all about. The roof leaked and the cabin had but one room, which the woman shared with two cows. I looked in, but did not care to enter. It was more like a floorless stable, that had not been cleaned for a week, than a human habitation. The house at some time had had a single window, but this was now loosely closed with stones. Most of the Lisouter houses, however, had at least one window, and several of them had two, though occasionally these lacked glass. All were small, varying in number of panes from one to four.

Mud and refuse were almost universal about the doorways, and a "midden" (manure heap) was always handy near the house front. A skeleton horse was feeding in a waste near the quarry; some old men, working-days past, were sunning themselves on the rocks; one or two old women were sitting or leaning on the walls near their cabin doors, some in idleness, some knitting. In the oat fields the men were reaping laboriously handful by handful with their sickles, and the barefoot women followed behind to bind the sheaves. The women gleaned over the ground as they worked, and picked up every straw.

I spoke with one man, and he said he had two or three acres in his farm, but it was very poor land, and in a wet year his crops were well-nigh failures. Still, he considered himself better off than most of his neighbors.

Nearly every day I saw the children going to school in the morning, and met them returning in the evening. Their aspect had the same untamed wildness then that it had as I saw them running about the bogs and crags that surrounded the home village. The schoolhouse was four miles distant, and the route thither was along a desolate road winding through the dun marshes. The children went barefoot and bareheaded, except for a few of the older boys, who wore caps. They each carried a piece of dry bread for their noon lunch, and that was all the food they had till they returned home late in the afternoon. But, with all their hardships, they looked sturdy and healthy. Probably weaklings do not survive long. Once I noticed that a boy in a group of children returning from school carried a book, and I asked to see it. It was a most forlorn little Third Reader — a wreck of a book — covers broken, marked and greasy within, and many pages torn or gone altogether.

As I handed back the book I noticed a great black bug crawling along the path, and I pointed it out to the children, and said, "That's a beetle, isn't it?"

But they said, "No, it is a prumpalong, sir."

They had never heard of such a thing as a beetle. "We do not have thim here, sir, I think," explained

one of the older children; "but we have prumpalongs — plinty of thim."

The schoolhouse was a bare modern building with gray plaster walls. It stood in the centre of a rough, rocky yard, that was surrounded by a high stone wall. Outside the enclosure all was bog, save for three or four houses with their little fields straggling along the road not far away. I inquired of the children what games they played at school, and they replied that they raced after each other some, and that was all. Indeed, their intermissions were usually spent in just sitting around and doing nothing. They indulged in no games, even about their homes in the village. Apparently, they had lost the impulse to play, and I thought nothing could be more eloquent than this of the depressing environment in which they lived.

One of the things I looked specially for in Ireland was the shamrock. I had no clear idea of what it was like, except that it was green and triple-leaved, and I supposed it was a native of the bogs. Often in my moorland wanderings I saw a coarse, fleshy plant that grew in thin clumps where the water gathered in pools. The leaves were three-parted, but larger than the largest clover. Still, I thought it must be shamrock, and picked some of it and showed it to a native. The native did not even know the name of my bogland weed, but he stooped down and showed me some of

the true shamrock growing by the roadside. It is an insignificant, yet delicate, little plant that loves to grow on stone walls and along roadways where the soil is poor and often scraped away. It was more like the downtrodden white clover that in America one finds growing in dooryard paths than anything else. The peasantry feel a real affection for the shamrock, and it is beautiful in their eyes. Like themselves, it lives amid hard conditions, and it seems pathetically appropriate that it should be the Irish national emblem.

IX

JAUNTING-CAR JOURNEYS

THE jaunting-car is Ireland's most characteristic vehicle for ordinary, light riding. It is a slender, two-wheeled contrivance whose virtues and peculiarities can only be fully appreciated by actual use. Immediately over the wheels on either side is a seat facing outward, and accommodation for one's feet is furnished by a swaying shelf or step on a level with the hubs. The driver has a seat in front, but he never occupies it unless the other two are filled. He usually has a mania for going about with a breakneck impetuosity, and a first experience on a jaunting-car is vividly suggestive of the adventurous. Every turn is full of startling possibilities, and as you swing around them you cling to your precarious

perch over the wheel with a realizing sense of the power of centrifugal force such as you never have had before.

It was a vehicle of this genus which I mounted one afternoon at Recess for a ten-mile drive to Cong on the shores of Lough Corrib. I occupied the right-hand seat and my driver the one opposite. The country along the route was bare and boggy, upheaving into frequent, steep, stony-topped hills that sometimes had little farms on their lower slopes. We passed many geese, pigs, and donkeys feeding by the roadside, and the driver always took pains to give the pigs a cut with his whip when they were within reach. Perhaps he had a touch of viciousness in his nature, for, in addition to his attention to the pigs, he was continually belaboring his horse, and was never content unless the creature was humping along in an uncomfortable canter.

Once we passed a schoolhouse. The door was open, and we could look in and see a room full of children. Outside were many more — a group of fifteen or twenty on each side of the porch. A woman teacher had charge of the group on the right, and one of the older boys, acting as monitor, had charge of the other. The driver said that in the case of most schoolhouses the reciting was all done indoors, but this particular one was very much crowded and there wasn't room. Then he went on to explain that he did not approve

of the new methods of education in vogue. About the craziest notion of all, he thought, was the attempt to teach the children words before they were taught the alphabet.

"It did used to be the way," said he, "before anything else, to learn your ah-b-c's so you could say 'em back'ards and for'ards and up and down till you knew 'em thorough — and that was the right way too! Our ould schoolmaster, his name was Connolly, sir, he taught his son that's now the captain of a liner sailin' to the foreign; and the master, nor his son neither, niver heard of no such nonsince as this learnin' readin', writin', and 'rithmetic before the ah-b-c's."

Among the people we saw on the road was an old man and a girl of sixteen or seventeen, the latter carrying her shoes in her hand.

"Why is it," I asked the driver, "that most of the women here in Connemara go barefoot, while most of the men wear shoes?"

"I cannot tell, sir," he replied, "except that the women do not care to wear shoes. They will not be bothered with them, sir."

During the latter part of our journey we kept along the borders of the broad, island-dotted Lough Corrib, which afforded a pleasant relief to the eye after being so long among the omnipresent bogs. Cong, too, as we approached it, looked quite attractive, owing to the

A Jaunting Car

presence of an unusual number of trees in and about it. But close acquaintance revealed a rusty, decadent little village. It was formerly much more prosperous and populous, and was the centre of considerable trade. In these modern days, however, steam connection with the outside world is a vital business necessity and, lacking this, Cong's condition has become one of settled hopelessness. The old women beggars lie in wait for all comers at the street corners, ruined buildings are frequent, and an atmosphere of decay and blight pervades the whole village. Cows loiter in the public ways, chickens hang about the home thresholds and walk in and out the houses at pleasure, and the pigs wander freely through the streets nosing into the puddles and garbage. At times these four-legged scavengers are assaulted by roving dogs, and then there is squealing and scampering; but the rout is not permanent, and the pigs are soon at their labors again.

Cong's chief claim to interest is its ancient abbey, one of the finest ruins in Ireland. The building dates back to the sixth century, and at one time it was the home of seven hundred monks and was the island's chief seat of learning. Contemporary with Cong Abbey there were in Erin various other monastic founts of knowledge, and at a time when England was sunk in Druidic barbarism, or engaged in wars

with invading Saxons, Danes, and Normans, Ireland was well advanced in civilization.

Like all the other ancient Irish monasteries, that at Cong owed its being to the promulgation of Christianity in Erin by St. Patrick, with whom the authentic history of the island begins. The saint was not Irish born, and he made his first acquaintance with the island in his sixteenth year as the captive of a band of pirates who had seized him on his father's farm in France. They sold him to a petty chief, in whose service he remained for six years. When he at length succeeded in escaping, he made his way back to France, where he became a monk and rose high in the Christian church. In the year 432 he returned to Ireland as a missionary appointed by the Pope, and wherever he went conviction and conversion followed. By degrees he visited all parts of the island, and king after king and chieftain after chieftain became the servants of Christ. St. Patrick had found Ireland pagan, but when he died the power of the old gods was gone forever.

After he had been laid to rest his disciples carried the cross of Christ to Scotland and England, to the Continent, and to the wild islands of the northern seas. Numerous monasteries sprang up, and Erin became famous as the island of saints, and was the resort of many students of distinction from various parts of Europe. Indeed, it is now conceded that the Anglo-

Saxons were indebted to the Irish mainly for Christianity and entirely for letters.

The ruin of Cong Abbey is well cared for, and a bushy-bearded, gray old gardener is always on hand, ready to act as guide for such visitors as stray into the domain. There are fine grounds with gravel paths overarched by gnarled trees, and sweeps of lawn through which a little river winds, sliding over its pebbly bed in crystal clearness. At one place the current of the stream is divided by a small island, on which are the remains of a tiny fishhouse that in architecture suggests a miniature church. From this building the old monks used to let down a net into the stream, and it was so arranged that when the net filled with fish, a bell rang and the monks went and drew in their catch. Tradition relates that it was their success in fishing which led to their downfall. The ruler of the district became envious of their good eating, and banished the whole fraternity and appropriated their fishing arrangements to himself.

Within the main part of the ruined abbey is a cemetery full of great stone slabs laid flat over the graves of the village dead. The space is cramped, and there is hardly a foot of it unoccupied. Each family, the old gardener said, owned just the width of one grave, and when a body is to be buried this grave is reopened. In making room for a fresh interment a good many

bones are unearthed, and sometimes three or four coffins still undecayed. It has always been customary to return the coffins to the grave, one above the other, in company with the most recent addition to their number; but the bones, until a few years ago, were simply thrown out and left scattered about the cemetery.

The grewsome spectacle presented by Cong in former days was not exceptional, for it was once the general habit throughout Ireland to inter the dead carelessly within two or three feet, or even less, of the surface; and when room had to be made in a grave for a new inmate, the earlier occupants were treated with scant ceremony. All the old churchyards were littered with decayed coffin planks and bones, with no regard whatever for decency. The sight of these human relics proved offensive to modern fastidiousness, and the lord of Cong Manor now compels the sexton to put the bones his pick and shovel brings to the surface back underground, while those that once strewed the place have been gathered up and are heaped in a mossy alcove of the ruin. If you choose, you can look in on them lying there in their dim cell — hundreds of skulls on one side, and thousands of lesser bones on the other side.

My attention was attracted, the second morning of my stay in Cong, to a little open square, at the bottom of the main street, where were erected some primitive

scales, consisting of a balance swung from a tripod of poles. This open square was the town market-place, and here began to gather, about nine o'clock, those who wished to buy or sell. They made a motley group, few in numbers, and with only the most meagre supplies of produce. I was particularly interested in the country people bringing in bags of potatoes on their little donkeys. Some of the men made very quaint figures. They wore knee-breeches, heavy shoes, and bobtailed coats, and they all carried short canes, shillalahs I suppose, and one or two had on antique stovepipe hats. They were like characters from the comic papers come to life.

Beyond the market-place, the village soon gave way to an upland country, that looked like the wreck of worlds. All the broad hilltops as far as the eye could see were covered with plains of limestone rock — gray, waterworn, and crisscrossed by multitudinous cracks, as if, after being subjected to great heat, the rock had suddenly cooled and shrivelled.

One of the peculiarities of the stone is, that it is sufficiently porous to allow water to filter through it readily, a fact demonstrated by a canal excavated at immense cost, to connect Lough Corrib with another large lough a few miles to the north. The enterprise was only abandoned at the last moment, when the water was turned on and surprised the pro-

moters by all disappearing as if the bottom of the canal had been a sieve. Nothing was left to show for money and labor, and for the prosperity the canal was to bring to Cong and the country round about, save this useless dry channel in the gray rock.

Where the limestone begins to give place to earth, on the borders of the village, there are patches of fir woods. In one of these, on a level outcropping of rock near the road, I glimpsed through the evergreen boughs a cluster of curious cairns of stones, some of which had slight wooden crosses stuck in their tops. On inquiring, I learned that these stone heaps marked a spot where, long ago, the monks, at the time they were expelled, had stopped on their melancholy pilgrimage and erected a cross. Ever since, when a corpse is brought along this road on the way to the burial-place, it is set down here, and the priest offers a prayer for the soul of the dead; and the cairns in the wood are memorial piles, heaped up from time to time by those who have lost friends.

One doubtful morning, encouraged by a few patches of blue that showed fitfully in the misty sky, I hired a jaunting-car and started for Letterfrack, twenty miles away. My driver was a stout, red-faced old man, who, in deference to the threatening aspect of the day, wore a greatcoat, and had a heavy red muffler wound around his neck and across his chin. He carried a stub of

A Class in the Schoolyard

a whip with a long lash, and every now and then encouraged his horse by a cut underneath. But he was kindly disposed toward the beast on the whole, and when the road was at all steep he got off and walked. We visited as we jogged along, and, among other things, we talked about the fairies.

"They do be all dead now, sir," solemnly affirmed my companion. "We did used to have them in the ould times, sir, but they be all dead, long ago. I've niver seen a fairy mysilf, sir, and in the last thirty years I've been out as late at night as any one, many's the time, driving about. Some may fancy they sees something in the dark, but it's not fairies. They do be all dead now, sir, though I thought different, sir, whin I was a slip of a lad; for, clost to where I lived then, there was a rath — that's a fort, you know, sir, big banks of earth around the top of a hill, that some says the sojers used to fight from. But it was always telled me whin I was a lad that the rath was a fairies' fort, and we niver dared to touch it with a spade, or cut down a tree growin' on it, or carry away a stone; and they said if you put your ear to the ground at night you would hear the fairy music risin' up from under the earth, but I was too scared to go there after dark, and I niver could hear anything of it in the daytime. Ah, well, sir, that was all just my boy notions. The fairies do be all dead, sir."

"But there are queer things happen even if the fairies are all dead," I ventured to suggest.

"Indeed there are, sir. Did you iver hear of Tom Taylor, sir? Well, sir, the man that's done the most good in Connemara and left the most money here was the gintleman I mintioned — 'Tom' Taylor, we called him. He was a gr-reat man. He would come to Mulaky's hotel and stop eight weeks and spind £400 there. He would give £15 apiece to his boatmen, and ivery one that had anything to do with Tom Taylor did get big money.

"Whin he wint out for a day's fishin' he would take along a dozen of porther and a dozen of ale and a quart of whiskey and two or three bottles of champagne. Oh, he was a har-rd dr-rinker, sir, he was that! On Sunday he would be havin' all sorts of races and lippin', and he payin' the best man. He was kind to the poor women, too, and always buying this Irish tweed cloth stuff from them and payin' them five shillin' a yard for't, though it was nothing he wanted in the worrld; and he would give it to his boatmen, and very like the boatmen would give it back to the women Tom bought it of, and they'd have it to sell to him again, or some other man.

"Well, sir, he had a house up here by Lough Inagh, and an ould man and his wife stayed there to take care o' the place; and, comin' on winter, one time, Tom

went away and said he would be back such and such a day and month. But just after he left he died. Well, sir, that time he said he would be back come, and the ould man and his wife that was stayin' in the house was sleepin' in their bed that night whin they heard a bell dingle dangle in the hall. It was about the middle o' the night, and the bell kept on and kept on and kept on, dingle, dangle, dingle, dangle, all the time till the ould man said he would go and see what that ringin' was if he died for't.

"So he wint out in the hall, and there was a row of bells there that wint to the different rooms upstairs, and, sir, the bell that was goin' it back'ards and for-'ards was the one that wint to the room what Tom Taylor always slep' in. The bell kep' a ringin', and the ould man wint on upstairs and opened Tom Taylor's door, and, sir, he said afterward he wished he'd stayed ablow stairs. For there was Tom's pipe layin' on the table with the heel of it toward him and the room was full of the smell of that pipe smoke, and, sir, it had exactly the same smell that Tom Taylor's tobacco smoke had when he was alive; and that's all I know about it, sir."

The road to Letterfrack for nearly the whole distance pursued a winding course through the dull, interminable solitude of the bogland. The waste was unfenced and treeless, and only broken by the great

gray mountains that thrust up through the water-soaked peat and lifted their rocky summits into the misty clouds. Often we skirted along a lough with its surface frayed into white caps and streaked with foam. On one of these loughs a melancholy sportsman's fishing-boat was beating back and forth through the frothy waters. It was astonishing, the amount of dreary hardship the gentry fishermen would bear on the chance of getting a few trout and salmon. Yet the worse the weather the better they liked it, and there had been a good deal of growling this year since the fishing season began because days of clouds and chilling downpour had been too infrequent.

"We wants it saft, sir," my driver explained, "south winds and rain. But it has been very dry, sir, and the wind blowin' from the north all the time this three weeks."

Sometimes we had a little cluster of huts in sight on a far hillside with a checkering of green and yellow fields about them. Once we passed a cart by the roadside. The horse had been detached and was baiting near by while two men were at work a half mile distant in the bog. My driver said they were either cutting sedge for thatch, or were gathering young heather for stable bedding. Another characteristic bit of bogland life was a woman, barefoot and bareheaded, after the usual custom of the region, walking briskly along the

THE MONKS' FISHING HOUSE

road knitting. She carried her ball of yarn under her arm, and as often as she used up the slack she unwound a few feet, tucked the ball back, and set her needles flying again.

When we neared the end of our journey the country became pleasanter, the land was more fertile, there were patches of wood, and across a lake a handsome castle came into view.

"A foine castle, that," remarked my driver, pointing to it with his whip, "but what will be becomin' of it after the lord that lives there dies? He won't want to be leavin' it, and he can't take it with him, sir. I'm thinkin' his mind won't be aisy whin he comes to dyin'. He won't be thinkin' of how he dies, but he'll be thinkin' of his foine castle."

Now the roadsides were lined with hedges of hawthorn, furze, and alder — and, more than that, there were gorgeous hedges of fuchsias, which grew broad and thick and five or six feet high, and were all blinking full of pendent blossoms. A sprinkling of fuchsias was to be found even in the other hedges, as if they were so hardy and weedlike they would crowd in anywhere. I was the more surprised, because one naturally thinks of them as a tender hothouse plant. They do, in fact, shrink from the cold, and their presence in the west of Ireland is due to the Gulf Stream, which washes the coast, and so tempers the climate

that the winters are very mild. Yet the impression was as if this was some work of the fairies whom my driver had affirmed were all dead.

Letterfrack was a sleepy little village whose chief claims to attention were a genuinely comfortable hotel — a rarity in Ireland — and a stony mountain on the outskirts of the hamlet that the guide-books recommended for climbing purposes. I let others climb who had a liking for that sort of thing, while I spent the remnant of the day that remained after my long ride in looking about the village. The only two persons I saw who seemed to have any special occupation were an old beggar on crutches, posted near the hotel door to beseech alms, and a boy with a donkey, bringing peat to the hamlet from a roadside pile a short distance out on the bog. Across the middle of the beast that the boy drove were hung two big wicker panniers, and the lad as he went to and fro was perched on a side-saddle behind. I watched him once arrive at the peat stack, slip off from the donkey, and back the creature up to the heap. He had just begun to fill the panniers with the brown blocks when a dog broke forth into turbulent barking on a near hill. I looked up, and there was a rabbit leaping along like a streak through the grass tufts, and the dog after it. On they came down the hill, and the donkey boy caught up a stone and ran yelling toward them. He

threw the stone, but he might as well have tried to hit a shadow. The rabbit was across the road in an instant and off into the bog. Further pursuit was hopeless, and the boy and dog gave up the chase and stood looking regretfully out on the vacant moorland.

I went on the next morning to Leenane by "long car" — a vehicle very much like a shaky omnibus, only the seats are turned outward so that the passengers dangle their heels over the wheels the same as on a jaunting-car. This particular long car was intended to carry eleven people besides the driver, but I imagine it could be made to convey almost any number by packing them into the chinks and corners. There were thirteen this trip. One climbed up beside the driver, the long seats on the sides held five each, and two extras roosted in the middle on the piles of baggage.

It was a heavy load for a single pair of horses, and we all got off and walked up the hills. That gave us a chance to exercise and ward off the cramps, and some of us gathered blackberries along the way, or picked flowers. Most of the journey was across the dark, lonely bogland, with misty-topped mountains glowering about on the horizon.

Leenane, which we reached toward noon, is a small village just back from the shore of an arm of the sea that reaches far inland among the bare mountains. As soon as I finished lunching, I started for a walk.

The road parted not far from my hotel, and, while I paused to consider which way I would take, my attention was caught by a peculiar old man standing in the doorway of a little shop close by. He was pompous in manner, quick and sharp in speech, and was always frowning and scowling with his gray eyebrows. A lanky lad was passing, and the man called at him crustily, "Come here, come here, I say!"

The lad stopped reluctantly and drew near.

"Do you believe there's a God in heaven?" inquired the man.

"I do," was the reply.

"Then why do you go around with your mouth hanging open, telling lies?" the man asked. "You promised me a load of lobsters yesterday by twelve o'clock, and you did not fetch them. I lost near five guineas by ye. What is your word good for, I'd like to know!"

This interview was hardly done and the lad gone, when another youth came along, and the old man stepped out to the borders of the highway and asked him how his father was.

"About the same," was the reply.

"Does he sit up?"

"No, he don't sit up."

"Then he must be worse. Oh, he's not getting along at all!"

Cong Marketplace

The man was going to have the exact truth, no foolish building on false hopes for him, and he was still ferreting out the facts and laying them before the too optimistic young man when I went on. I kept to the main road, and at the end of about a mile came to a village lying in a basin-like hollow, scooped out among the mountains. All over the lower levels of this basin were scattered peasant cottages. There was never any regularity in their placing. They were dotted around just as it happened. Among them were numerous tiny patches of potatoes, oats, cabbages, and turnips, and on the upper hillsides cows and sheep were feeding. Nearly all the little stone-walled plots were fringed about with briers and thorn bushes, and in the vicinity of the cottages grew a few stunted trees — not fruit trees, but birches, alders, and the like, that sprouted up from the crevices of a garden wall, or that rudely hedged a bit of a yard. They no doubt served to some extent to shut off the wind, and they furnished a stick now and then when a roof needed mending, and an occasional handle for a farm tool.

Many of the little grass fields had been mown, and the hay was in process of curing. The drying was hastened by raking the hay to the field corner that was least wet, and then winding it all up by hand in rolls about as large as a good-sized muff. The form of the rolls was such that they shed the rain, and the

hole in the middle let the air circulate, and helped the curing at such times as no rain was falling. In a climate so showery ordinary methods of haymaking would be ineffective.

Through the hollow of the glen coursed a small stream, and on one side of it was a rough road, but on the other only a muddy path which went up the hill and down the hill, across brooks and over hummocks, linking the various cottages together, and continually coming to an end in dooryards, and going on again from around the corner of a stable. The average dooryard was very miry, and had a great number of slimy cobblestones strewn about it, which, I believe, were intended to prevent a person from sinking in out of sight when the wet winter weather made all the soil a black morass. Still, the yards served very well as a loitering-place for the geese and hens and pigs, who used them rather more than the cottagers, if anything. The pigs were the most conspicuous of the farmyard creatures, and they were by no means confined to the home premises, but wandered around much as they pleased. They had the air of owning the country, and they did not run away when you approached. On the contrary, they were more likely to come and root up your trousers leg by way of friendly investigation. Not infrequently the cows, pigs, and other creatures occupied the same building with their owners, and in that

case the dank manure heap outside sometimes had the appearance of having been thrown out of the parlor window.

In my tour of the village I was watched by the inhabitants from fields and house-doors and the road, as if no stranger had ever visited the place before. Once a shock-headed man came out from a hovel and invited me in to see him weaving on an old hand loom. The children of the neighborhood followed me into the hut, and with them came a dreadful-looking foolish man who persisted in keeping close to me.

The weaver kicked off his slippers and sat down behind the loom, and got his machine into clattering motion. In the gray gloom of the ill-lighted apartment, I could barely see the warp lifting and falling and the shuttles flying back and forth. The process was picturesque, but it was no pleasure watching it in that low, foul, dirt-floored dwelling, with the wild-looking idiot man and the staring crowd of children so close about. As far as the house was concerned, it was very like the others of the village. They were all low and small, with sedge-thatched roofs. Some had whitewashed walls, which added to their outer cheerfulness, but inside was the same earth floor, with its inevitable spatterings and litter, and meagre, untidy poverty.

In one of the homes I found a woman spinning wool on a great wheel, and a little pig was at her feet

with its head in the family porridge-pot. But when I appeared the pig went and sat down on the floor beside the baby, who, unless looks belied appearances, was as much of a rooter as the creature at his side. A few blocks of "turf" were smouldering in the rude fireplace, and, as is usual in these dwellings, much of the smoke found its way out into the room, and made a more or less tardy egress by the door, which is always open when any of the family are at home. A score or so of neighbors gathered to watch me, and, much to their entertainment, I tried spinning, and succeeded in producing a few feet of rough, uneven yarn.

When I was preparing to leave, a half-blind old woman among those looking on remarked, "I hope your honor is going to give us something for your spinning — not that we'd be asking for't, but because you'd be wantin' to."

Naturally a request so diplomatically put had its reward.

I went on from Leenane the day following by jaunting-car northward to Westport. The weather was as uncertain as usual — gray mists about the mountains, now dropping low, now lifting, occasional glints of sunshine, and, hardly less frequent, sweeps of showers veiling the landscape and leaving an aftermath of thin shreds of rainbow wandering about the lonely moors.

Stony Land

Often, when we passed near houses, the bareheaded children would hasten to the roadside and then run beside the car, silently panting, for a long distance. They said nothing, but were constantly looking up to me in the hope I would throw them pennies. Toward the end of the journey there were numerous dark peat cuttings in the bog, and over many acres were scattered cairns of dry peat blocks, which in places gathered so thickly they were quite suggestive of primeval villages.

Presently the marshlands came to a sudden end on the edge of a steep declivity down which our road crept to Westport. There lay the village far below, reposing amid a greenery of trees, and there lay outspread the beautiful Clew Bay, with its multitude of islands, while off to the left, on the mainland, rose the lofty cone of Croagh Patrick, looking forth from the dissolving clouds. This mountain is regarded as sacred to Erin's patron saint, who is believed to have begun here his mission in Ireland, and who was accustomed, when he was sojourning in Connaught, to retire to it at Lent for fasting and prayer. From its top he is said to have blessed Connemara, which he declined to enter because it looked so bleak and barren. There is also a tradition that he collected on Croagh Patrick all the serpents in Ireland and drove them thence into the sea; and a certain hollow is pointed out as a place

in which the serpents endeavored in vain to take refuge as they descended.

Another interesting feature of the mountain is a holy well, the origin of which is of course ascribed to the great saint. One day, warm and thirsty with climbing, he wished for a drink, and instantly from the ground at his feet there gushed out a cool spring. It disappeared after he had drunk; but many centuries later a good priest, poking about the neighborhood, took notice of a flat stone with a cross on it lying by the pathside. He raised the stone and a clear stream poured forth. An excavation, rudely walled about, has since been made for the spring, and in this now dwell two sacred trout who add much to the well's celebrity. The proof of their sacredness is attested by the fact that some years ago an heretical soldier, having caught one of the trout and taken it home with the intention of eating it, had no sooner placed it on the gridiron than it disappeared from before his eyes; and the next day it was found in the waters of the well as usual, only its side bore the mark of the hot bars of the gridiron.

On account of the mountain's connection with St. Patrick, it is celebrated as a place of religious pilgrimage, and at certain seasons it is ascended by devotees from near and far. For my part, the saintly associations of the mountain were not sufficient incentive in

themselves to induce me to make the climb, and the weather was too doubtful to assure the view which the summit affords, and which, if report is true, would have well repaid the labor.

X

AN ISLAND ON THE WILD WEST COAST

THE isle of Achill barely misses being a part of the mainland, so narrow is the separating channel. A bridge affords connection, and access is easy. It is reputed to contain the most striking scenery to be found on the wild west coast; but I got small hint of anything romantic on the twelve-mile ride across it to the island's single hotel at Doogort. The landscape, now dipping into wide valleys and now heaving into broad, rounded hills, or at times rising into steep mountains with rocky, pinnacled tops, was desolate in the extreme,

and the little reclaimed patches, with their accompanying cabins, were few and far between. Indeed, the island was one almost interminable bog, and its peat deposits, which often attain the remarkable depth of twenty feet, are extensive enough to supply all Ireland.

Doogort proved to be a little settlement of whitewashed houses on a hill slope, with a big mountain behind, and, close below, a small bay that the sea had scooped out of the land, and rimmed with a long curve of sandy beach. The other villages on Achill were even less imposing than Doogort. Nearly all of them were small fishing hamlets, each made up of a huddle of low stone houses with roofs of thatch or turf, on which there were apt to be sproutings of sorrel and grasses. I passed several such places on a jaunting-car trip I made the second day I was on the island, and in every one had a tagging of boys running after the car with "diamonds" for sale. Investigation showed that these diamonds were simply broken amethyst crystals, and the inducement to purchase did not seem very great.

However, I made one diamond boy happy at a certain village, where I left the jaunting-car behind, by taking him along with me as guide on a visit I paid to a rocky promontory, reaching in a thin wedge far out into the Atlantic. The boy was, of course, barefoot, and said he went so most of the year, and that

many of the Achill people never wore shoes, either winter or summer. He didn't when he was little. But now, for wear in cold weather, he had a new pair once in three years.

We clambered along a rough path cut in the side of a slope, that descended in steep turf and rocky leaps from the heights far above, to the sea far below, and at length we came to a big stone by the pathside which the boy pointed out as having been a favorite seat of the famous Captain Boycott. It seemed that this notable spent his last days on Achill, near that part of the island where we then were, but it was on the mainland that he won his reputation and gave the language a new word. He was agent on an estate, and the tenantry took offence at what was regarded as his severity, and tried to prevent any one's dealing with him. The laborers refused to help in the harvesting and the household servants left, and the family had to do their own work as best they could. No one dared to sell them provisions, and there was danger that the agent would be starved and ruined, if he was not killed by the riotous peasantry. Matters finally became so serious that a large body of soldiers was sent to protect him. Besides intimidating the boycotters, the soldiers assisted in the forsaken fields, and, as they had to have food, the captain sold them, at a good profit, the produce they helped to harvest. Thus the

Goats on an Achill Hillslope

first boycott not only failed, but the man against whom it was aimed made money on it.

The day's weather was a curious medley of dull clouds and of bright sunshine. For a while the sky would be gentle and soft and summery to perfection; then it would turn frowning and dark, the mountains would be shrouded, the gloomy shadows gather over the bogs, and presently the cold rain would come sweeping down from the high slopes and go driving in gray mists across the sea. I encountered one of these showers while I was still on the path, and hastened to raise my umbrella, and sat down on a convenient hummock to await its passing. The boy, at the same time, crawled into the lee of a bank just above. From this high perch I had in sight a fine sweep of lofty cliffs extending along the coast, until lost to view in the hazy distance. Seaward there were frequent rocky islets girt about by the foaming waves tearing ceaselessly at their crumbling ramparts, and, near at hand, feeding peacefully on the steep slope, were a few cows and several flocks of goats and sheep.

I lingered where I sat for some time after the rain had ceased falling, and presently along came a party of tourists, ascending with the intent to climb to the topmost height of the promontory. Three natives were in attendance, one with a hamper on his back, another loaded with a bag of peats, and the third, a

boy, at the rear of the procession, bearing a teapot. I was cordially invited to join this caravan, but I concluded instead to return to my car. The driver was waiting for me with the information that there was just time to get to the "Cathedral Cliffs" before high tide, which would make them inaccessible. As it was, we would have to race for them, he said. So off we went by a short cut along the shore — a straight three miles of hard, wet beach that held reflections like a mirror, and over which the horse padded very fast and smoothly. Then we came to a muddy torrent right athwart our course, so fierce and loud I thought it would sweep us out to sea if we attempted crossing. But into it we drove and picked a careful passage to the farther side and hurried on once more.

Finally the beach ended abruptly in a line of great cliffs that the waves had chiselled into stupendous caverns and arches. The rock that formed the bluffs was in layers distinct enough in their marking to look at a little distance as if they were man's handiwork. One section that was particularly fine took the form of fretted columns, and, overhead, a green bank sloped down from far above like a roof, giving the whole quite the appearance of a big church.

To get a closer view of this temple of nature I left the car, and walked along at the foot of the crags over a beach strewn with rounded stones and brightened

with shreds of seaweed from the distant tropics. The tide was fast rising and the waves were roaring on the strand, and sliding in farther and farther and trimming it narrower each moment. Already the green water had invaded the outer arches of the cathedral. But the spot was a grand one, and I stayed on until I heard the faint shout of my driver behind me, and saw him standing up in the car and waving his whip excitedly. I took warning and started back; where there were smooth stretches I ran, and when I reached the car and clambered aboard the driver lashed his horse and we were off at a gallop. The sandy beach, which a little before was many rods wide, was now a mere ribbon, and the waves, stealthy, powerful, insistent, in a minute more would wipe it out altogether. I clung to the car, the horse raced, and, at the last moment, with the waves lapping about the wheel-spokes, we turned sharply aside and climbed over a great ridge of pebbles, and were on the firm turf beyond the reach of the hungry sea, which had taken full possession of the beach we had just left.

We now went on back to Doogort; and when we arrived, about four in the afternoon, I took a fancy to get a downlook on the country from the mountain near the hotel. This mountain was twenty-two hundred feet high, but the guide-books and the people at the hotel said the ascent was easy, and I started with cheerful

anticipations. I went up a village lane that soon carried me beyond the little group of houses and huddling fields into the marshlands. Then I followed the top of a turfed wall for a time, and after that jumped along on the tussocks of the bog, avoiding the wet hollows as much as possible. The bog did not keep to the lower slopes, as I expected, but went up and up, and the whole mountain side was wrapped with its miry mosses. The spongy earth, thickly hidden by grasses and heather, was soaking, and the water came squeezing out in quantities with every footstep. It was steep, hard work.

At length I came to the edge of a precipice that looked as if half the mountain on the seaward side had slid away, and along the verge of this cliff I continued to zigzag for a long time, getting higher and higher and more and more tired. The wind blew in rough gusts that in the exposed places threatened to carry me away, and every little while a shower came pelting down, and I would hunt up a boulder for a seat and huddle beneath my umbrella. On ahead rose a pinnacle of rocks toward which I had been long striving. I had thought this projection would be near the summit, but when I actually gained it I saw that the crown of the mountain was still far skyward. Apparently I had only come about half way, and the rest of the distance was all strewn with splintered rock and was worse than the bog I had been climbing

The Cathedral Cliffs

through. Below lay the world spread out like a map — hills and valleys, villages, roads, a lake, the sea, several islands, and, far off eastward, the dim mainland, while over all hovered the wraiths of the doubtful, oft-changing weather — fog, showers, cloud shadows, gleams of sunlight, and now and then a vague rainbow. High above me, marked by a flagstaff, was the mountain summit, one minute lost in a whirl of mists and wild clouds, and the next minute coming forth clear and powerful and beckoning me upward.

But it was of no use. The experience in climbing to the point already attained was sufficient, and I now went jolting and slipping on the rough journey downward. When I reached the hotel I made a reckoning of the number of showers I had been out in that day, and could recall nine. Besides these, several others preceded my start in the morning, or fell after I returned in the evening.

I had finished dining and gone to my room, when some commotion outside drew me to the window. There, on a wall close below, lay the long, sleek body of a seal, shot that day by a hotel guest, on an islet fifteen miles distant. The caverns of this islet are a famous haunt of the seals, and parties frequently row out to have a try at the game. The seals are of one of the coarser species, and the skins have little value, save as trophies of the hunt to decorate, in the form of rugs, the sportsmen's homes.

It was the custom of the guests at this Doogort hostelry to gather in the parlor evenings to chat, and to hear the landlord tell stories. I found a company of fifteen or twenty there when I came down from my room. A tall Englishman was discoursing about the day's shooting on the seal island. He said that the natives were disinclined themselves to molest the beasts, as they believed the seals were human souls, allowed by special grace to survive the deluge, and in this shape to await the last judgment. He added that one of his rowers told him he had seen a mermaid in Achill waters the year before, and that five other men, who were with him at the time, had also seen her. She was at first swimming toward them, and they distinctly observed her woman's face and her long hair floating behind. Then she turned and swam away, and they saw she had a scaly body like a fish.

This reminded one of the company gathered about the peat fire in the hotel parlor, that only the other day, in Tipperary, some men took an old woman, who was said to be a fairy, and scorched her in the fire to drive out the evil spirit. They burned the old woman horribly, and it was doubtful if she could live.

Next our landlord took a turn. He said: "A good many believe that the fairies will spirit away children. They will carry off a healthy child and leave instead a weazened little dwarf. One day they played that trick

on a tailor, and he kept the dwarf several years and it didn't grow any, and was just the same shrivelled little thing it was in the beginning. Finally, the tailor made up his mind what the matter was. So he heated his goose red-hot and held it over the dwarf, and said, 'Now, get out of here — I know you!'

"But the dwarf never let on it noticed him; and the tailor lowered the goose little by little till it almost touched the dwarf's face. Then the dwarf spoke and said, 'Well, I'll leave, but first you go to the door and look round the corner.'

"The man knew if he did that the dwarf would get the best of him, and he said he would not. Then the dwarf saw 'twas no use, and it sprang out of the cradle and went roaring and cackling up the chimney, and a good child lay there in its place.

"I had one queer experience myself. It was the time of the Fenian troubles. I was sitting up late, — I suppose it must have been after midnight, — but I hadn't taken anything, and was as sober as I am this minute. Well, it got to be very late, as I said, and by and by I heard strange noises in the hall. It was like men tramping past, and they kept going and going, hundreds of them, and they were dragging dead bodies and all that. I could hear their breathing, and I could hear their clothing rub along against the walls. Then the ceiling and the sides of the room I was in

began to wave. I took a candle and went out in the hall, and there was nothing there, doors all fastened, everything all right. Now, what do you make out of that? I never have been able to account for it myself.

"That reminds me of the Achill girl that went to service in Dublin. She got a good place — wages and work and everything were perfectly satisfactory; but there was one room in the house that she wasn't allowed to go into, and that troubled her. She saw a great many people go into that room, and she never saw any of them come out. The room was always quiet-like, and always kept locked, and the girl never had a chance to see it, till one day, when the house folks all happened to be away, she found they had left the key in the door of that room. So she went in, and what did she see there but rows and rows of heads — heads of beautiful ladies — heads severed from the bodies, and the long hair hanging down — yes, rows and rows of them; and the girl like to have fainted, and she got out of there in a hurry and went to her chamber and gathered up all her belongings and came home — never notified the police nor nothing. But I'll tell you what my idea is. I think it was a barber's shop she looked into, and the customers went in one door, and out another that she didn't know about, and it was just wigs, and such fixings, she saw."

Tourists on a Long Car

The company laughed and commented jokingly, but presently lapsed into silence and contemplatively eyed the glow in the fireplace. Then the landlord asked if we had ever heard of the Achill hat. He said that in the olden time a hat was an article that the Achill man never wore while on his native island. But when he went to the mainland he preferred to look like the rest of the world, and at Achill Sound, where the people boated themselves across, a single hat was kept on a pole. When a man was going to town on the mainland he climbed the pole and got the hat. On returning he shinned the pole again and left the hat for the use of the next man.

Following this story, the landlord told of a wreck that makes the saddest chapter in all Achill's history. Many of the young men and women of the island spend a part of every summer in Scotland helping in the potato harvest. They go by steamer from Westport, and there are those who walk the whole forty miles thither, but most make the journey on some fishing smack. A few years ago, when preparations were being made for the annual exodus, a man who owned an old hooker was engaged to carry a large party down to Westport and put them aboard the Glasgow steamer. The hooker was only allowed by law to carry forty persons, but the owner was to get a shilling apiece, and, intent on mak-

ing all the profit he could, he took on sixty-eight. The day was quiet, with just enough wind blowing to make it pleasant sailing, and Westport was reached all right. They were in the harbor and within half a mile of the quay, when some one called out that the Glasgow boat was close by.

The young people all hastened to one side to look, and at the same time the hooker approached the steamer in such a way that the big boat's hull took all the wind out of the hooker's sails, and it went over at once, and those sixty-eight Achill folk were clinging together and struggling in the water. Thirty-eight of them were drowned, and the next day thirty-eight coffins with the bodies in them came up by special train to Achill Sound.

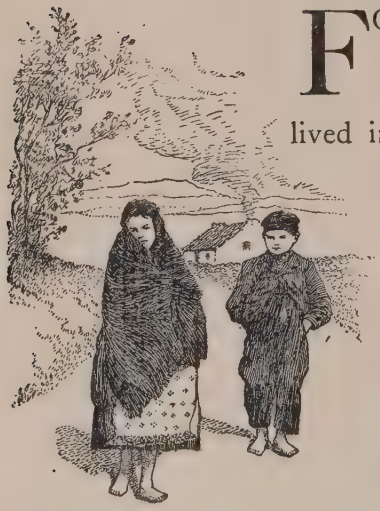
All the population of the island was at the station to meet them — a thousand people or more, and there were sore hearts in Achill that day. One family lost five, others four, three, and two. The man who owned the hooker drew his boat up on the beach, and there it lies to this day. Those who escaped drowning returned to Achill and gave up going to Scotland, and they never have got the better of their fright, and never will, the landlord said.

Of the homes on the island he related that it was customary to keep the cows and pigs in the living room, and when there was a pony it was usually tied

to the foot of the bed. The chickens occupied the same apartment, laid their eggs in any part of the room they found convenient, and roosted on the rungs of the table. Indeed, the people are so poverty-stricken that the home conditions could hardly be otherwise than comfortless and barren to the last degree. A decade or so ago they were almost starving through the failure of their crops and many were assisted to free emigration across the Atlantic. Since the bridge has been built and the railroad has come, the facilities for marketing their fish and farm produce are greatly improved, and the ordinary necessities of life are within easier reach than they once were. Yet the lacks are still serious, and I have never seen a region more boggy, storm swept, and desolate.

XI

A BOGLAND SCHOOLMASTER



FORMERLY the schoolhouse had been a dwelling, and a family still lived in one end. It was close by the roadside, a low, thatched building, just like any peasant's cabin, save for a small wooden sign on its front, lettered in bold type, "Luckawn National School." The day was dull and threatened rain. Indoor shelter seemed more desirable than outdoor rambling, and, enticed by the drone of child voices, I rapped on the patched and decrepit schoolhouse door. The schoolmaster opened it. He was a tall lank man with tumbled hair and a ragged brown beard, and looked as if he had been having

exciting times. He wore an overcoat that hung limply from his sloping shoulders; there was a great square patch on one knee; his collar had long been a stranger to water and starch, and his necktie was frayed and out of place. He peered at me through his spectacles from the low doorway, and when he had recovered from his surprise at so unusual an occurrence as the advent of a visitor, he made me welcome.

The school occupied a single small room, and had to get along without a hall or even a closet. Such of the boys as wore caps and such of the girls as wore shawls, a garment commonly serving the double purpose of wrap and head-covering, bestowed these articles of raiment in an aperture where once had been a window. Overhead was no ceiling other than the rafters and cross strips supporting the thatch, shadowy and begrimed, and draped with sooty cobwebs. Three small windows admitted light through the thick walls, but were far from successful in coping adequately with the gloom of the apartment. They had cracks about them, and so had the shabby door, and the smoky little fireplace could hardly have done more than mitigate the chill of the room in really cold weather.

Long, rude desks, with accompanying backless benches, filled about half the floor space. The children were nearly all barefoot, and their clothing was ragged and much patched. The master said he encouraged

them to go barefoot, and he wished they all did. He believed it was healthier, but his chief reason was that the expense of shoes was too great for some; and yet if the habit of wearing them was general among the more prosperous, pride would force the others to have them also. A few came barefoot to school right through the winter, but all of the children and the women of the region, too, had shoes for wear to Sunday mass, though many of them ought not to have been guilty of such extravagance.

In one corner stood the master's small, much-battered desk, that, after all, was less a desk than it was a cupboard to hold the lesson books, slates, and other school materials. What the space underneath the desk failed to accommodate was stowed close by in a box, or leaned against the wall, or was heaped up on the floor. The school supplies were of the cheapest possible description, usually much the worse for wear. Most of the books were thin little affairs in limp cloth covers that cost only a cent or two. The paper was coarse, the illustrations rude, and the printing very bad. Their literary and pedagogic merits were not much better. Books and other necessaries were bought by the master, and the children were supposed to pay him for what they used. But it was a very poor district, and those who reimbursed him were the exception rather than the rule.

A Class in Reading

The master had brought the only chair the room contained from behind his desk for me when I entered, and I sat down to look on while the school continued its work. My knock had interrupted the roll-call. This was resumed, and the master checked off the remaining names on his register. At the same time one of the boys stood on the floor with a slate in his hands and counted those present — eighteen boys and fourteen girls. That done the master made a reckoning to be sure his register and the boy's figures agreed, and then noted down the numbers and the total on a small blackboard hung near the fireplace next to a silent, broken-glassed clock. The attendance was about the average for that time of year; but in winter, when the young folks, who during the summer are off to service in richer and more fertile sections, are home, he often had a school of sixty. That was too many for one person to instruct effectively in so small a room, and he did not try to do much teaching. His efforts were absorbed in the attempt to keep them employed and out of mischief. Some of the winter scholars were eighteen years old, but none came over thirteen in summer. Two hundred days made a school year. Few of the pupils, however, were present more than half the time, the master said, for neither they nor their parents cared whether they got any education or not.

In their studying the children were noisy, restless, and chaotic. They conned their lessons in whispers or aloud; they moved about and even stood on their benches; they played, and they drew pictures on their slates, and they spoke to each other freely and sometimes had sharp-voiced disputes. One of the smaller boys spent most of his time crawling about on the floor.

The teaching and keeping of order were in part intrusted to several of the older scholars, who took turns in trying to make the children in the seats attend to their studies and in putting questions to classes on the floor. Often there were two such classes out at the same time, one in a far corner studying a dingy wall chart or map, and another standing in a little group near a window, reading or spelling, or going over an arithmetic lesson. The members of these classes were an unruly lot, and cared little for the authority of their schoolmate teachers. The monitors did their best to live up to their positions by rapping the delinquents over the head with a pointer; but such treatment was not always meekly tolerated, and I noticed in particular one spunky little girl who never failed to slap back. Yet she and all the rest were afraid of the master and quailed before him. Most of them had a worried, harassed look, as if in constant fear of impending disaster, and not without reason.

The master was naturally kindly, fond of children, and had the welfare of the neighborhood much at heart. But from old-fashioned habit and theory he was a tyrant in his petty realm, though he may have been that day more autocratic than usual, with intent to impress on me his earnest purpose to do his work thoroughly. His voice and manner were severe and explosive, and the children seemed to regard him as a perfect ogre. In an intermittent way he made the whole school feel the rigor of his rule, and the poor monitors, whose trials I thought were heavy enough already, came in for a generous share of his contumely.

"Are they working, girl?" his rasping voice inquires of a barefoot thirteen-year-old with a ragamuffin geography class. "They are not, indeed!" and he makes a hop to her across the floor like a Jack-in-the-box, and administers a cuff on the ear. Then he skirmishes about with flying arms and gives the whole class a disciplining.

"Now, boy," says he, returning to his own class and indicating a youngster before him, who had neglected his book to watch the descent on the geography students, "what are you doing?"

He gives the boy a push, and taps him on the side of the head with a pointer. That pointer was the master's sceptre. He could give most startling raps with it on his desk, he could rattle it with ominous

warning on the covers of the book he held in his hand, and he was constantly using it more or less energetically on his scholars' craniums. Physical force in the form of a shove or a slap was his favorite method of straightening the pupils into position, and he often accelerated an individual's progress to and from class by reaching out his hand to the back of the culprit's head, and making him or her break into a little run.

"Blow up that fire, boy!" he commanded of a sudden. The lad chosen for the task dropped as if he had been shot, and so escaped the hastening hand which was about to catch him. On his knees, with cheeks distended he blew brightness into the smouldering coals on the low hearth, and then added fresh fuel from a little heap of peat blocks lying near on the broken and patched floor. This peat was supplied the year through by the children themselves, who brought it from home, a few sods at a time, in their hands. The replenished fire began to blaze and to smoke, and the room grew so hazy that the master had the boy open the door, and put a stone against its base to keep it open for a time.

The youngest child in the squad lined up before the master was a boy of six, in skirts, who did himself credit by reading a lesson of four-letter words without a mistake. On the strength of this success,

THE TEACHER AT HOME

the master tried him on something harder, and he soon struck a word that brought him to a full stop.

"Go on now, like a man," encouraged the master, looking over the rims of his spectacles with his head a little on one side.

The boy regarded his book attentively, and scratched the back of one foot with the toes of the other, all to no purpose.

"You're stuck!" cried the master.

The boy sounded the first letters of the word, and stopped again.

"That's right!" the master exclaimed, leaning forward with hopeful intentness. "You have it in your lips — speak up!"

But the boy failed his instructor at this crisis, and the master turned regretfully away. "Tell him, any one in the class," he said.

Just then he noted that a girl in the seats was the centre of a small riot, and he called out, "Mary Ann, will you conduct yourself?"

Mary Ann conducted herself, and the reading lesson proceeded. One of the older boys took a turn, but he stumbled over his words sadly, and the master's wrath promptly rose. "You are not watching, you sleepy thing, you!" said he, and he gave the lad a punch by way of emphasis. "Put some life into it, sir! Begin again, and read that as a Christian should!"

The boy did as he was bid, but in his fright stammered worse than ever. "You must do better than that," the master ordered, "or I'll pitch the nose off from you! Put your finger on the words, now!"

After the reading came spelling, beginning with the word "larch," which fell to one of the girls. She looked around doubtfully.

"Spell it like a good girl," coaxed the master; and she responded in hasty falsetto, "L-r-r-c-hetch."

That was correct, for the Irish pronounce *a* and *r* exactly alike. Their *h* also has an un-American individuality, while the final letter of the alphabet they call zed. But nothing in the spelling-lesson seemed to me quite so astonishing as to have the master presently give out whole sentences for the children to spell through, as, for instance, "All birds come from eggs." This, and other sentences, even longer, were wrestled with more or less successfully, just as if they had been many-syllabled words.

The master handed me one of the books from which the children had been reciting. It was a fresh copy from a small grocer's box behind his desk, and its only blemish was a corner that had been nibbled by the schoolroom mice. The cover was of flexible red cloth, and looked bright, modern, and attractive. On it was stamped the name, "First Book of Lessons," and the price, "one half-penny." The title-page

showed that it was "printed and published by direction of the Commissioners of National Education, Ireland." It was not then a local schoolbook, but one prepared for general use, and I was a little astonished when I turned over the leaves to find it reminiscent of our American schoolbooks of fifty or seventy-five years ago. I noted that it had a flavor of unconscious Irish humor, and that the dry educational method adopted for its framework was clothed with a phrasing and an uncertainty of what was coming next, that, to a reader not a native, was full of surprise and entertainment.

Lesson I. contained the picture of an ox, above which was a line of disconnected letters that looked like some mystic word — a i m n o s t x y. Below the picture were the following remarks: —

an ox, my ox, is it an ox?
it is, is it so, is it my ox?
no ox, so it is, is it so? no.

The ox was honored with a first place in the book because it could be spelled with two letters, while none of the other animals at all familiar can be spelled with less than three. In the first four lessons no word of over two letters was allowed. Then followed eight lessons where the limit was three-letter words, and not till more than fifty of the sixty-four pages were passed was there any word exceeding one syllable.

Such sentences as the following were characteristic of Lessons II. and III. : —

is he up or no ?
lo, we go.

And there was this odd dialogue concerning j, z and certain of the other letters : —

is he at j, or at z ?
he is at z ; I am at j.
is it q ? no, it is p.
is it v ? no, it is u.

The comments on these last four letters sound contradictory and too much like juggling with the truth, but I suppose the intention was simply to furnish a clever devise for making a child recognize the difference between letters that resembled each other closely. It seemed to be the compiler's idea that this sort of thing was a most valuable educational principle, and right through the book no effort was spared to bring near together words that were similar in length, sound, and look, no matter how unrelated the sentences.

On page 5 I found that time-honored statement, "The cat has a rat," beginning a paragraph which went on and seemingly spoke of the rat thus — "Can it be Sam or Pat? It is Sam." The reason why it was Sam and not Pat was apparently explained in the next two sentences, which affirmed that "Pat had on a hat. He sat on a mat." If that does not satisfy you that Pat was not the rat, what will ?

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S WIFE

Pat was a favorite hero of these little lessons, though he had to share prominence with Joe, Ned, Tom, Mat, and a number of other boys whose names were shortened in the same way. Leading characters among the girls were Bess, Jane, Eva, and Rose.

The book did not fail to inculcate good principles. In one of the earlier lessons, for instance, after inquiring, without any preliminary reference to the article mentioned, "Is it a pin or a pen?" as if you would be likely to confuse the two, the text abruptly declared, "I will do no sin." This skipping from one topic to another in the patchwork of the paragraphs was further exemplified in the following mixture of milk, tar, and morals in three consecutive sentences: "There is milk in the jar. Tar is put on a rope. It is sad to be at war."

Like plums in a pudding religious maxims were scattered all through the book — not in any discernible order, but as if the compiler had tucked them in here and there by chance whenever the idea occurred to him. The theology, like the pedagogy of the book, gradually developed, and on page 24 I found at the end of a purely secular lesson a complete paragraph devoted to the subject: —

"God loves us, and sent his Son to save us. The word of God tells us to love him. If we are bad God

will not love us, and we shall not go to him, when we go from this world."

It seemed a pity to present God to the child mind in so forbidding an aspect. The sequence and connection found in the above were lacking in most parts of the book, and the religious element was usually minimized by what followed or preceded it, as in this: "To do ill is a sin. Can you run far?" Or this: "Sound the horn. A child of the dust should not be proud." Running may have some vague connection with sinning, but what has sounding the horn to do with pride? Here is still another example of the same sort: "Is he friend or foe? Have you hurt your toe? A good boy will not tell a lie. Sin is the cause of all our woe."

Science found a place in the book in random remarks like: "Gold is not white as tin is," "A snail can put out his horns and draw them in," "The moon gives light by night, and the sun by day."

The primer had frequent pictures which, while not without interest, were uniformly rude and blotty. The text below the picture of the ox, to which I have referred, though a trifle uncertain in its comments on the creature, sticks to the one subject. The more usual relations of the picture to the text are better illustrated by another lesson a few pages farther along. The cut represented a man in a big coat, carrying a

basket on his arm, and hobbling along with the aid of a cane. He had his dog with him, while two goats were feeding on the near hillside, and in the distance there was a small house. The first sentence, apparently speaking of the man, said, "He was born in a house on the hill." Then came the question, "Is rice a kind of corn?" Afterward, so far as one can judge, we return to the man with the remark, "He wants a firm kind of cord." Why he wants a firm kind of cord is left a mystery, for the rest of the lesson is: "Get me a cork for the ink jar. The morn is the first part of the day. This is my son; I hope you will like him. My son, sin not, for God hates sin."

I will quote one more full lesson to show the capacity of a paragraph for condensed chaos and picturesque variety.

"Can a worm walk? No, it has no feet; but it can creep. The child is sick; tell her not to cry; let her stay in bed and sleep. This cliff is steep, and I feel my head light as I look down. Did you meet Fred in the street? Weep no more. My boot is too tight; it hurts my foot, and I am lame. Will you drive the sheep home for me?"

In the last third of the book the lessons changed in style and each confined itself to one subject. A fair example of this was the lesson about

"The Cow.

"The cow is one of those beasts that chew the cud. She is of great use to us. She gives us nice milk to drink; her flesh, which we call beef, is good for food, and her hide makes us shoes and boots. Of the bones of the cow we make combs and spoons; and of her fat we make soap, so that each part of her is of use. We ought to be kind to the cow which gives us such good things."

That is realism with a vengeance. Just think of the milk we have now from the cow, and of the beef and leather, spoons and soap, that are in prospect!

The volume as a whole did not seem to me calculated to stimulate very much a child's love of knowledge or literature, yet it seemed to serve the purpose of unlocking the doors of learning to these Luckawn youngsters, and I fancy there may have been something in its style peculiarly adapted to the Irish temperament.

The pupil who had the most distressing experience during my school visit was a mild, red-headed boy about eleven years old. He failed in his grammar, and the master set him to doing his task over again — a dreadful purgatory of parsing. Half an hour later the boy's ideas proved to be as hazy as ever. There he stood, with his hanging head, alone before the master, who called him a "villain" and a "scoundrel" and

A Hayfield

added, "You're the laziest feller ever I met! Now, try that again! Ah, worse and worse! That's terrible! That's the way ye'll do with the inspector," and he mocked the boy with cutting sarcasm.

"Now, answer me this!" he continued. "Is that worrud a verrub or isn't it a verrub?"

But the boy, breathless, and half scared to death, stood like a confessed criminal awaiting sentence. The master's rage waxed keener, and his voice rose stormily, "Say it out!" he shouted, "or I'll put your head on the other side of your face! I'll throw you out of the door for disgracin' the school!" and he knocked the grammar out of the lad's hand onto the floor.

"Now, pick that up and give it to me!" was his next command; "quickly, quick!"

The boy obeyed. He was crying and the tears were trickling down; but the master hushed him up and said, still wrathfully, "Clean your nose, boy! Hurry, or I'll get Anthony Kelly to come up and clean it!"

Then the master once more had his pupil try the grammar lesson, and that not availing, he in despair dashed the book in the boy's face, and sent him weeping to his seat.

It was the most volcanic performance I had ever seen in a schoolroom, and I was a good deal disturbed. Perhaps the master noticed this, for he hastened to

explain that the boy was his own, or he would not have been so sharp. I left soon afterward, but not before the master had given me an urgent invitation to call on him in the evening. He wanted to talk about America. That boy of his, he was afraid, with all his teaching, would be no scholar. He did not seem to take to book-learning, and he would have to work with his hands for a living, and his father was thinking America would be the best place for the lad.

I accepted the master's invitation, and on my way to his home that evening was passing the schoolhouse, when someone rapped to me on a window. It was the master. He said he often worked there at his desk, after school hours, as long as he could see, for he was going to take examinations soon, in the hope to gain a promotion. As a younger man he had been too fond of the drink, and he keenly regretted those years wasted in dissipation, and felt he must now make up for lost time.

He gave up drinking to become a member of the Father Mathew Total Abstinence Society — an organization which has branches, not only throughout Ireland, but in all parts of the world to which the Irish have emigrated. Its founder, born in 1790, was a priest of the order of Capuchins in the city of Cork. His disposition was singularly charitable and benevolent, and his gentleness and affability, his simple and effec-

tive eloquence, and the zeal with which he discharged the duties of his ministry, won for him the universal love and respect alike of rich and poor. He is described as a man somewhat above the middle size, his features handsome and expressive, and at the same time peculiarly mild and gracious, his manner persuasive and easy, and humble without a shadow of affectation, his voice low and musical. No one could have been better fitted to obtain influence over a people proverbially swayed by the affections.

Previous to Father Mathew's time drunkenness lacked little of being esteemed a positive virtue in Ireland. Among the higher classes the host who suffered one of his guests to leave his table sober would have been considered mean and inhospitable. Ingenious devices were invented for compelling intoxication, such as glasses and bottles so formed that they could not stand, and must be emptied before they were laid on the table. If it was thought that a departing guest in "the good ould times" would be able to mount his horse without assistance, he was presented at the door with a quart glass which he was forced to drain, seldom against his will. An Irishman drunk was an Irishman "all in his glory," and the more whiskey he could carry the greater the distinction. The lower classes were by no means behind the gentry in their love of strong drink, and few of their popular

songs were without some reference to whiskey, while its praise was the sole theme of many of their ditties.

Such was the situation when Father Mathew, at the age of forty-eight, inaugurated the temperance movement associated with his name. At first the society was wholly local, but Father Mathew's marvellous success in Cork led to the suggestion that he should visit other cities. He made a tour of Ireland, and later crossed the channel and made his plea in the larger centres of Irish population in England and Scotland. Everywhere he won followers in great numbers. The formalities of joining the society partook of the religious, and were accompanied by the presentation of a medal, to which the utmost reverence was attached by the recipient; and an opinion prevailed among the more ignorant that the mission of the "apostle of temperance" was marked by many miraculous manifestations of the assistance of heaven. It was believed he had the power to heal diseases and preserve his followers from all spiritual and physical dangers.

The association included a large proportion of the adult population of Ireland, without regard to rank, creed, or sex; and so complete was the revolution in the habits of the people, that numerous distilleries and breweries ceased working. Among those who suffered loss for this reason were the members of Father Mathew's own family, who were largely inter-

ested in the distilling trade. Father Mathew himself in his latter years was pecuniarily embarrassed by engagements into which he entered in the course of his philanthropic labors. Very large sums of money passed through his hands, but the munificence of his charities and the enormous expenses connected with his various missions, and perhaps his own unworldly and improvident habits involved him in painful difficulties. He died in 1856, but the fruit of his labors is still visible. Many of those enrolled in the association have not kept their pledges, yet they rarely relapsed into the extreme of drunkenness, and the general tone of public opinion as regards the use of intoxicating drinks underwent a complete and enduring change.

The home of the Luckawn schoolmaster was a half-mile up the road from the hovel in which he taught. In outer appearance it was very like the cottages of his neighbors — whitewashed stone with a thatch roof. Inside it was neater than the average, and the furniture was better, and there was more of it. Still, the house, in all its belongings, was about as humble as it could be with any comfort. Its two rooms were both open to the rafters, and their floors were of uneven cement. I met the master's half-dozen children, most of whom I had previously seen in school, and I met his wife, who wore over her head a kerchief after the manner common among the peasant women of the region.

She set forth a lunch for the master and me in the bedroom adjoining the kitchen — tea, and goat's milk, and bread with caraway seeds in it. After we had eaten, and the master had crossed himself, he called for his pipe and sat down on a low bench by the kitchen fireplace for a smoke. That finished, he was ready for a walk.

We went in the waning evening light a mile or two up the valley. On ahead, looming hazily against the horizon sky, was one blue peak, but the view otherwise was of a bogland glen, barren and craggy, with a little river wandering through it, and scattered farm cabins clinging along the slopes. The master had a real affection for the valley, and was continually calling my attention to some phase of it — a glimpse of the stream, a curve of the road, or a green bush on a hillside — and asking if it was not beautiful. He seemed to be convinced that few landscapes could be more fair. We talked of America, and we talked of Ireland, and we talked of the master's own trials and troubles. He complained resignedly of the monotony of his work, of the pay, which was only about £60 a year, and of his having no associates but his few books. One of these books which had recently come into his possession was a cheap reprint of Bacon's "Essays," and he was much impressed with the wisdom of the old philosopher and his quaint but forcible expression.

He had begun teaching when he was eighteen, and had moved about here and there through the country, teaching ever since. The buildings he had taught in varied. Some were far better than this at Luckawn, and he mentioned one fine enough to cost £200. On the other hand, in his earlier experiences, he had been much worse provided for, especially those times when he had taught a "hedge" school — that is, had boarded around at the cottages, and made the kitchen of whatever house he happened to be living in serve for a schoolroom.

He was not wholly correct in his use of the term "hedge school." The real article dates back to the days of William of Orange, who, having found the Catholics in Ireland entirely on the Stuart side, was moved by the rancor of this fact, and zeal for his own religion, to make Ireland Protestant by penal laws. Among other provisions these laws excluded the Catholics from the army and navy, the magistracy, the bar, and the grand juries. They could not be sheriffs or gamekeepers or constables, and were forbidden to own arms. They could not possess a horse worth more than £5, and any Protestant tendering that sum could compel his Catholic neighbor to sell his steed. Worst of all, no education whatever was allowed to Catholics. A Catholic could not go to the university, he could not be the guardian of a child, or keep

a school, or send his children to be educated abroad. The list of partisan and oppressive laws was a long and shameful one, and it was all too rigorously enforced, but the country clung to its prescribed faith nevertheless. To escape the ignorance to which the people were condemned, the priests established what were known as hedge schools, and taught the children in secret by the roadsides, on the hilltops, and behind stone walls and hedgerows. The necessity for secrecy is long past, but there have been many schools in the nineteenth century existing under such untoward circumstances that the term "hedge school" could hardly be considered a misnomer. Still, it commonly means, as used now, any school taught in a very rude place never intended or prepared for the purpose.

After my evening walk with the Luckawn schoolmaster, the only time I saw him was several days later, when I called one afternoon at the schoolhouse. Lessons were over, and the master was marking in the scholars' books their tasks for the morrow. That finished, he told them to "Begone!"

It was raining, and the boys put on their caps and buttoned their tattered coats closer, and the girls pulled their faded shawls over their heads. Then they all ran out into the storm with whoops of rejoicing. The master gave me the one chair. On his desk lay a paper printed in Irish. "Ah," he remarked, picking

THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY.

it up, "that is as easy to me as English," and he read a half-column aloud, in proof of his assertion. He sometimes wrote for the paper himself, both prose and poetry, he confided, taking a tin snuff-box from his pocket and indulging in a generous pinch; and he asked what I thought of blank verse, double rhymes, etc.

At present he was composing a speech and a long poem, with the intention of journeying to Dublin a month or two later to recite them at the Annual Irish Literary Festival. Perhaps I would like to hear them. He was evidently much pleased when I affirmed that I would, and said that to rehearse them before a stranger would help give him courage for the great occasion to come. He cleared his throat and adjusted a red handkerchief in the outer breast pocket of his overcoat so that the corner showed; he felt of his necktie, and he pulled his spectacles down on his nose from where they had been reposing amid the ruffled hair on the top of his head. Then a doubt occurred to him. "What do you think?" he inquired, "would it be better to wear or not to wear specs?"

I expressed the opinion that it would be all right either way, and he said personally he preferred to wear them. He was not used to speaking in public, and through his "specs" he saw the audience more dimly and was less timid; but he believed the impression

on his hearers was better with them off. The latter thought was conclusive, and he laid them on his desk. Then he drew himself together and began. His voice changed with the changing sentiments of the words, but his prevailing tones were gentle and melancholy. In the attitude assumed at the start he stood looking straight ahead, with hands interlocked and at rest before him. Gestures, however, soon began to come thick and fast, that which recurred most frequently consisting in clasping one or both hands to his heart.

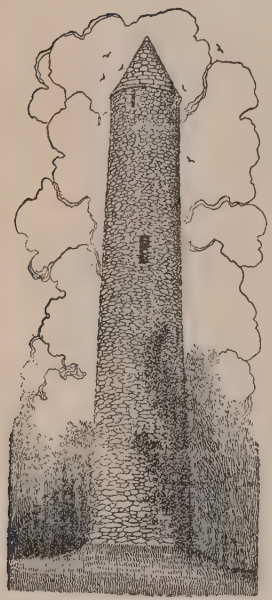
The speech was on the revival of the Irish language, the poem a general glorification of Erin. At least, so the master described them. I had no other clew, for they were in the ancient Gaelic. At the close of each peroration he inquired with concern, Was it slow enough, was I pleased with the sound of it, and could I tell just how long it had taken by my watch.

When I left the schoolhouse a little later I bade the schoolmaster a final good-by, and the next morning I resumed my journey — but I never shall forget him. He was a simple and earnest soul, mistaken perhaps in his conception of the necessity of sternness and violence in teaching, yet at heart sound. It is not, however, so much the teacher that I recall as the literary enthusiast and scholar rehearsing his Irish speech and poem in the dusk of his old battered schoolroom. He made a pathetic figure — tall and hollow-chested, his shabby

clothes hanging limply about him, and in his eyes a vague far-away look, showing that in spirit he was declaiming before the Dublin audience. After all, the golden glow of hope and aspiration can shine amid the boglands just as brightly as anywhere else in the world.

XII

THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY



THE most primitive electric road in existence is probably an eight-mile line in the north of Ireland, connecting Port Rush with the Giant's Causeway. At all events, I have never met with anything of the sort slower or more clumsy. Along one side of the track runs a continuous iron rail about two feet above the ground, from which, by means of contact with brushes rubbing its surface, the electric current is conveyed to the machinery of the cars. The tramway company claim that this exposed rail is harmless, yet warnings are posted not to touch it, and the local inhabitants declare that it is the cause of numerous fatalities to man and beast, and that the

A Gatherer of Winkles and Limpets

danger is serious and ever present. The truth of such stories is denied by the railway officials, who say the fatalities are due to something besides electricity. Their explanation is that the natives along the route are in the habit of bringing out their sick farm animals, when hope of recovery is past, and leaning them against the electric rail, intending to have the creatures die in that position, and give their owners a plausible claim to damages. Whatever the facts, the device looked crude and awkward enough to be capable of all the mischief attributed to it.

The tramway trip is a very pleasant one in fine weather. For a large part of the distance the sea is in sight, and you get glimpses of many great chalk cliffs fronting the ocean. These are curiously worn by the waves, and among the rest of Neptune's fantastic carvings, is the profile of a gigantic man's head wrought on a mighty buttress of the coast, and including the cliff's full height. There are the forehead, nose, eye, and a laughing mouth, astonishingly perfect, while the sea foaming at the neck of the vast head is very like the frill of an old-fashioned shirt bosom.

Another striking object on the way is the extensive ruin of Dunluce Castle perched high on a rugged promontory of black basalt. Dunluce figures in the old Irish wars, and has been made the scene of a romantic novel; but the incident in its history which

gave the ruin most interest to me was the story of the tragic fall of a portion of its walls in 1639, carrying eight servants over the precipice to their death. I fancied I could see the exact part of the castle where this casualty had occurred, and discern the scar left on the cliffs by the slipping away of a huge mass of the rock underlying the ancient outlines of the building.

The Causeway is not far from the end of the tram-route; yet on a hilltop directly in the path thither stands Mary Jane Kane's Royal Hotel, by far the most conspicuous feature of the landscape. The position of the hotel seemed to thrust on me the duty of engaging lodging there before I went farther. This I did, and found the hostelry a very comfortable one, though the "Royal" portion of its name was not as realistically descriptive of it as the "Mary Jane Kane" part. Indeed, grandiloquent titles are favorites among the Irish, and "Royal" Hotels and "Palace" Hotels are as likely as not to prove the opposite.

To get to the Causeway I had to descend a long, steep slope at the back of the hotel, and follow the shore half a mile eastward. On the way I loitered along the beach, and stopped to watch some boys with forks getting kelp from among the rounded, water-worn boulders that strewed the shore. They gathered the wet, slippery seaweed into several great

heaps, and presently loaded it on a heavy farm cart and drove off up the steep incline.

Then I noticed two women picking about among the black rocks well out toward the sea. One was elderly, and the other young, and both were bareheaded, barefooted, and tattered. I was curious to know what they were doing, but at my approach they desisted from their work, and the elder of the two sat down and did her best to look melancholy. The other promptly addressed me, and said her companion, or, to use her words, "that woman," was her mother, a widow, poor, and in trouble, and all that sort of thing. They had come down to the shore this morning to get dulse, periwinkles, and limpets, in part for their own eating, and in part to sell. Some small coins from my purse assuaged the widow's sorrows for the time being, and cheered the daughter, and the two resumed their search for humble treasures among the pools and boulders.

When I at length neared the Causeway I found my path intercepted by a high iron fence, and I could go no farther save by paying sixpence. I produced the requisite coin, passed through a turnstile, and had the famous specimen of Nature's handiwork immediately before me. After all, the Causeway in itself was in no wise striking or imposing — just a low rock pier running out seaward for about two hundred yards, and

descending gradually till it sank below the waves. The formation, however, made it strangely impressive and interesting, for it is composed of some forty thousand great, upright, stone columns, averaging from fifteen to twenty inches in diameter. An odd characteristic of the pillars is that they are in joints from one to two feet in length, compactly fitted together, the upper end slightly concave, the lower slightly convex. They are mostly five, six, or seven-sided, but occasionally you find those with four or eight sides, while a very few are nine-sided, and a single one occurs which is triangular. The cracks between are always distinct, though the separation is so slight as to be almost non-existent. Taken as a whole, the make-up of the Causeway, in its dissimilarity to the usual shapelessness of rock formations, is very suggestive of a Titanic piece of mechanical construction. You can easily fancy that it is the work of an actual flesh-and-blood giant of the past, as the legend states. This personage, Fin MacCoul by name, was the champion warrior of all Ireland, and he was naturally much disturbed to learn that a certain Scotch giant, safe across the channel, was given to boasting he would swim over and give Fin a drubbing if it were not for wetting himself. Fin could not abide such talk, and he fell to and built a road of stone straight across the channel, that the braggart might have no further excuse

for not coming over to make good his boasts. A fight ensued, and Fin was of course the victor. One would have thought that his Causeway, made of this almost indestructible basalt, might have withstood the ocean storms, and lasted entire to this day, but the fragments remaining are still sufficient to give color to the legend.

Another story of Fin MacCoul, which seems to me particularly entertaining, relates that while he and his gigantic relatives were working at the Causeway, he took a notion to go home and see how his wife, Oonagh, got on in his absence. But concern for his wife was not his only reason for this visit. It seems there was one giant in the world of whom Fin was afraid. His name was Cucullin, and such was his strength that the stamp of his foot, when vexed, shook the country for miles around. His fame had spread far and wide, and it was said that nothing in the form of a man had any chance in a fight with him. It was also common report that by one blow of his fist he had flattened a thunderbolt, and this thunderbolt, shaped like a pancake, he carried around with him in his pocket to show to his enemies when they were about to fight him. He had given every giant in Ireland, excepting Fin MacCoul, a considerable beating, and he swore he would never rest night or day, winter or summer, till he could serve Fin with the same sauce.

Fin had hitherto kept dodging about from place to place, as often as he got word that Cucullin was on his scent, so that no encounter had occurred; and it was chiefly the rumor that Cucullin was coming to the Causeway to have a trial of strength with him, which resulted in his being seized with a very warm and sudden fit of affection for his wife. He only paused to pull up a fir tree and lop off the roots and branches to make himself a walking-stick, and then set out for his home on the top of Knockmany Hill.

There he spent two or three happy days with Oonagh, but the dread of Cucullin grew on him until his wife could not help perceiving that something lay on his mind, which he was keeping altogether to himself. Finally, he confessed his trouble, and added that he was assured Cucullin would shortly follow him from the Causeway to his home.

"Well," said Oonagh, "don't be cast down; depend on me;" and she hastened to send around to the neighbors, and borrow a score or so of iron griddles. These she kneaded into the hearts of as many cakes of bread, baked the cakes on the fire, and set them aside afterward in the cupboard.

About two o'clock the next day, Cucullin was seen coming across the valley, and Oonagh immediately got out the household cradle, and had Fin lie down in it, and cover himself up with the clothes. "You

must pass for your own child," she told him; "so just you lie there snug, and say nothing, but be guided by me."

She had hardly finished tucking Fin in the cradle when Cucullin walked in. "God save all here!" said he. "Is this where the great Fin MacCoul lives?"

"Indeed it is," Oonagh replied. "God save you kindly — won't you be sitting?"

"Thank you, ma'am," said he, taking a chair. "You're Mrs. MacCoul, I suppose?"

"I am," was the response; "and I have no reason, I hope, to be ashamed of my husband."

"No," returned the other; "he has the name of being the strongest and bravest man in Ireland; but for all that, there's a man not far from here that's very desirous of taking a shake with him. Is he at home?"

"Why, then, no," she declared; "and if ever a man left his home in a fury, he did. It appears that someone told him of a big basthoon of a giant called Cucullin being down at the Causeway to look for him, and so he set out to try if he could catch him. Troth, I hope, for the poor giant's sake, he won't meet him, for, if he does, Fin will make paste of him."

"Aha!" exclaimed the visitor, "I am Cucullin, and I have been seeking Fin these twelve months."

"Did you ever see Fin?" inquired Oonagh.

"No."

"I thought so, I judged as much; and if you take my advice, you'll pray night and day that you never may see him; for I tell you, it will be a black day for you when you do. But might I ask you to favor me with a little help, seeing as Fin's not here. You see, after this long stretch of dry weather we've had, we're badly off for want of water. Now, Fin says there's a fine spring-well somewhere under the crag just down the hill, and it was his intention to pull the rock asunder and find it; but when he heard of you, he left the place in such a fury he never thought of the water I'm needing, and if you would be so good as to do the job, I'd feel it a great kindness."

This request was a startler to Cucullin, but he arose and went with Oonagh to see the place, and after looking at it for some time, he pulled the middle finger of his right hand until it cracked nine times. Then he stooped, and tore a cleft about four hundred feet deep and a quarter of a mile in length, which has since been named Lumford's Glen.

The sound of rending rocks came to the ears of Fin, lying in his cradle, and made the perspiration start from every pore of his body; but Oonagh still kept up courage, depending on her woman's wit to carry her through.

"You'll now come in," said she to Cucullin, "and

eat a bit of such humble fare as we can give you. Even if you and Fin are enemies, I am sure he would have me treat you hospitably."

Cucullin entered the house again, and she placed before him half a dozen of the special cakes she had baked, together with a firkin or two of butter, a side of boiled bacon, and a stack of cabbage.

The giant put one of the cakes in his mouth, and took a huge bite out of it; and, of course, his teeth, much to their detriment, struck the gridiron. "Blood and thunder!" he cried, "what kind of bread is this you gave me?"

"Why," replied Oonagh, calmly, "that's Fin's bread — the only bread he ever eats when he's at home; but, indeed, I forgot to tell you that nobody can eat it but himself, and that child in the cradle there. I thought, however, as you were reported to be rather a stout fellow of your size, you might be able to manage it, and I did not wish to affront a man who thinks himself able to fight Fin. Here's another cake that's maybe a bit softer."

Cucullin took the second cake, and nibbled at the edges. It seemed to be all right, and he was hungry. So he bit vigorously into the middle, and met with the same painful surprise as before. It made him exclaim loudly and wrathfully.

"Well," commented Oonagh, "if you're not able

to eat the bread, say so quietly, and not be wakening the child."

At this juncture, Fin gave a skirl that made the giant visitor jump, coming, as it did, from the infant Fin was represented to be.

"Arrah, now," said Oonagh, "the boy's hungry;" and she went over and put into his hand a cake which looked like those she had set before Cucullin, but which lacked the griddle. It soon disappeared, much to Cucullin's astonishment, who secretly thanked his stars that he had missed meeting the father of a child who could eat such bread as that.

"I'd like to take a glimpse at the lad in the cradle there," said Cucullin to Oonagh; "for I can tell you that the infant who can manage the like of that nutriment is no joke to look at, or to feed of a scarce summer; and do you mind if I just take a feel at his teeth before I go?"

"With all the pleasure in life," Oonagh responded; "only, as the best of them are far back in his head, 'twould be well to put you fingers a good ways in."

This was Fin's opportunity, and no sooner were the fingers of Cucullin's right hand in his mouth than he bit off the middle one, on which, in some occult way, his enemy was wholly dependent for his strength. Then Fin leaped from his cradle, and Cucullin soon lay before him a corpse.

The Kitchen Dresser

The moral of this story, in its Irish telling, is that, "the women, if they bring us *into* many an unpleasant scrape, can sometimes succeed in getting us *out* of others that are as bad."

At the time of my visit to the Causeway, sea pinks were blossoming in the crevices of the pillars, and where it joined the mainland was turf sprinkled with daisies and primroses. There were lesser piers in the neighborhood, and on one of these was a group of columns which formed a chair, mainly used by sentimental maidens for wishing purposes. Every distinctive feature of the neighborhood had a name, and this nearly always was connected with the giant — as the giant's organ, chimneys, spectacles, pulpit, etc. But some of the islets offshore had names wholly their own, and their own legends, likewise — Sheep Island, for instance — whereon it is said just twelve sheep can be pastured. If there is one more than that number, they exhaust the feed and starve; if one less, they die from overeating.

Many tourists were at the Causeway, strolling about, and sitting here and there among the columns. The waves constantly boomed and crashed along the shore on either hand, and out in the bay several cockleshell boats with their sightseers were tossing, now rising on the swells, now sinking out of sight, as if to be engulfed. These boats came from a cove near the hotel,

and the passengers, after obtaining a sea view of the lofty coast cliffs, were landed at the Causeway. One load disembarked while I was there. The waves ran high, and dashed at frequent intervals far over the jagged rocks. The two rowers backed cautiously toward the Causeway, awaited a favorable opportunity, and then one of them leaped ashore. But a wave came, and the other rower had to pull off, while his fellow ran up the rocks to escape the foaming outclutch of the breaker. Again the boat backed, and with the aid of the man on shore the three passengers, two of them ladies, were hastily jumped from the violently heaving craft and hurried from the wet lower rocks to safety farther up.

Within a mile of the Causeway three or four enormous pillared promontories jut out into the ocean, and their height and blackness and castellated form make the scenery very wild and majestic. The likeness of the cliffs to human masonry is in certain places so wonderfully close that one is quite prepared to learn that this similitude led astray here a warship of the ill-fated Spanish Armada. The captain mistook a group of shattered columns on a height for the pinnacles of Dunluce Castle, and, planning his course accordingly, his ship went ashore. Four only of the crew escaped, and 250 Spanish sailors lie drowned in the little creek beside the Causeway. In commemo-

ration of this disaster the bay is named Port-na-Spania.

When I left the shore it was to continue eastward by a narrow, ascending path dug in the face of a steep slope. In places the path encountered slides of loose stones, or was hollowed out of the volcanic crags, and portions of it overhung such dizzy depths that signs had been put up to warn pedestrians of danger. At the worst points a wire cable was fastened along the wall for the explorer to grasp. The scenery among these high precipices was on a huge scale, and stirred the imagination much more powerfully than the view from the Causeway. Above were the buttresses of gray columns; down below, the sea, assaulting in vain the cliffs' hard, black foundations that had been fused by enormous heat into an adamant defying destruction.

But as soon as I attained the summit of the heights the aspect of nature underwent an entire change. The landscape became wholly tranquil and pastoral, and round about were cultivated farmlands, sweeping away in gentle undulations as far as the eye could reach. Underneath the soil, however, was the basalt which forms the Causeway. It outcrops for a long distance on the Irish north coast, and in the ancient geological era, when it was deposited, its burning lava overflowed twelve hundred square miles,

and buried the tract from ten to a thousand feet deep.

A few days at the Causeway sufficed, and then I journeyed inland one Sunday afternoon to Ballymoney. Like most Ulster towns, Ballymoney has a large Scotch population, which, I suppose, accounted for its Sabbath air of quiet; for the Scotch observe the day much more soberly and religiously than the Irish. At the little hotel where I stopped in quest of lodging, the parlor was occupied by a gray-bearded man and a sharp-featured old woman. The former sat by the fire with one eye to a hand-glass, reading a paper. The latter was at the table, leaning over a great family Bible outspread before her. My impression had been that family Bibles were for ornamenting the best room, rather than for reading; but this one showed the marks of being much used. I asked if I could get a room for the night.

"Ye can if ye are ceevil," replied the woman, looking at me over her spectacles.

I promised to be that, and she agreed to take me in, though not without some preliminary questioning about my business, to satisfy herself that I was no tramp or desperado. This matter being settled, I went for a walk, and did not return till toward evening. The landlady was then hustling around getting my supper; but the gray-haired man still sat by the

fire, with one eye applied assiduously to the hand-glass.

After I had eaten and a youthful maid had carried away the dishes, I drew my chair up to the fireplace, and the landlady brought me a pair of ragged, worsted slippers. She insisted, in her roughly-kind Scotch way, that I should take off my shoes, put on the slippers, and make myself comfortable. That attended to, she sat down, and we began a conversation which soon resulted in rousing the man with the hand-glass to take part. It seemed that he was a boarder, an Irish Protestant, and I was particularly interested in his comments on the relations of the religious sects in Ireland, for he spoke intelligently, without bitterness or intolerance. I would not vouch for all his theories, yet in large part they agreed with my own conclusions, drawn from what I had observed in my travels.

He said that the Catholics and Protestants in the north, while not warm friends, got along together very peaceably of recent years. You would rarely hear of serious outbreaks, or any marked display of ill-will. When there was trouble it was due to the roughs of either party, not to the rank and file. Drunkenness was the most common cause of belligerency. The truth of a man's particular form of religion never came home to him so strongly as it did when he was intoxi-

cated, and he would just as soon prove his loyalty to his own faith and his abhorrence of others' errors with blows as not. Of the feeling that exists among the ruder elements of society one obtains an inkling by studying the scribblings in the railway carriages. The Pope gets a curious intermingling of curses and blessings in these shaky pencillings, and the name of King William is visited with like adoration and obloquy.

Intermarriage between the Scotch and Irish was formerly not infrequent; but the priests of late years will not allow the members of their flocks to go astray in that way. As a rule, Protestants trade with Protestants at the town shops, and Catholics with Catholics; yet this is the natural drift of like to like, and there is little religious significance in the fact. The drinking-places are generally in the hands of the Catholics; but otherwise the Protestants control nearly all the larger business interests. Prosperity inclines more toward the latter than toward the former, and the Catholics all over Ireland represent in the main the poorer and more ignorant classes. The Irish are as quick-witted and as capable as any race; but they are in the power of the priests, and their religion seems to narrow rather than broaden their intelligence. In the Protestant churches thought is stimulated, and discussion and disagreement are always rife. There is more harmony

in the Catholic churches, but it proceeds from intellectual stagnation.

In education, even where the natural advantages are the same, the Catholic schools are inferior. The reputation of some of the private schools at monasteries and convents is excellent, but the public schools under Catholic auspices are rarely as well taught or have as good books as those of the Protestants.

It is the misfortune of the Irish to be much addicted to the drink habit; and while the attitude of the Church is less favorable to the liquor interests than it once was, its efforts for temperance are scattering and not often very strenuous. This is to be expected where nearly all the clergy are themselves drinkers, and very many of them are the sons of liquor-dealers. Indeed, it is something of a custom among Catholic dram-sellers, where there are a number of sons in a family, to educate one of them for the priesthood. Drinking among women is believed to be increasing. They do not often go openly to the saloons, but buy their liquor at the groceries, and consume it at home.

A peasant with ambition to gain wealth likes nothing better, after getting a little capital by scrimping and saving, than to start a small shop. In addition to buying and selling, he makes small loans, and charges a high rate of interest both on money lent and on unpaid bills. His patrons are improvident enough

not to mind the per cent charged if they get credit for present needs. They are optimistic, and have no doubt of their ability to pay later. The racial optimism finds another illustration in the freedom with which the farmers go on each others' notes. The business relations of neighbors become so entangled that when one fails it means the ruin of several. The average native's lack of judiciousness is distinctly shown when you ask his opinion about the weather prospects, or inquire the distance to some place to which you are travelling. He nearly always encourages you with cheerful prophecies as to the weather, and diminishes the miles that lie before you amazingly. This is a pleasant sort of failing, but such mental aberration does not make for success and thrift.

Yet the condition of Ireland has been improving for years past. The law-makers have studied the country with honest intent to learn its real needs and apply remedies, and the people themselves have been gradually improving in agriculture, and are learning to adapt themselves to the needs of modern commerce. In 1841 the island had a population of eight millions. Now, owing to the immense outflow of emigrants, there are not much more than half that number. The decline is not due to English oppression, but has occurred because the people have been almost wholly dependent on the soil, because farms were small, the system of

Spring Flowers

agriculture poor, and because it has been impossible to meet the competition resulting from the development of the new lands in North and South America and in Australia. The farmers, not only in Ireland, but in all the older countries, have seen hard times. This is true of England and Scotland and the continent, and, as well, of the longer-settled portions of America. Values have kept dropping both in products and in land.

Ireland has never been and probably never will be a manufacturing country. It possesses certain large brewing and distilling interests, and some cloth mills, but it is handicapped by its lack of coal deposits, lack of capital and skilled workmen, and its tendency to turbulence. Without question it has resources yet undeveloped; nevertheless, whatever affluence it wins must come through farming rather than manufacturing. The prospect would be brighter were it not that one-seventh of the island's surface is covered with bogs. Their dampness is a potent cause of rheumatism, but they are not otherwise unhealthy, and exhale no miasma. However, no cultivation of their soil can possibly yield more than a scanty livelihood, and they are over-populated. Aside from the boglands, Irish soil has great natural productiveness, and the climate is so mild and the fertilizing rains so frequent that agriculture should have a future of at least moderate prosperity.

In their way, the people of Erin have a genius for politics — a fact perhaps more fully realized in our American cities than anywhere else in the world; but in no other nationality do men attain position and power so little by solid ability and judicial poise, and so much by wire-pulling and imaginative fluency. A man with a racy tongue and a plausible way of putting things easily wins wide influence over the masses, and sways them as he wills. Under the circumstances, my Irish acquaintance at the Ballymoney hotel thought that home rule would mean chaos. One may not wholly agree with him in this or his other conclusions, but his views are certainly suggestive.

On Monday morning I walked out into the country a few miles and visited a farmhouse once occupied by the ancestors of our American President McKinley. The dwelling was a humble one-story building of whitewashed stone, with a roof of thatch. In its far end were the cowsheds. Two or three great stacks of peat were piled in the dooryard, and the house interior was as primitive as these accessories. The kitchen, with its broad fireplace and stone floor, was in wild disorder. A great churn stood in the middle of the room, a baby was creeping about underfoot, a girl bending over a piggin set in a chair was washing dishes, and a dishevelled woman was attending a black pot hung over the peat fire. Pretty soon the man of

the house appeared and collected toll of me, explaining that this was customary, and that he expected to make a good deal of money out of the place, showing it to American visitors. The most interesting information he had to impart was that one of the ancestral McKinleys was "hung from the house" a hundred years ago.

I started back to Ballymoney presently, and later the same day went on to Antrim for the special purpose of seeing the Irish Round Tower there. It stands in the park of a gentleman's estate, and is a very perfect specimen, tall and slender, and gently tapering upward from a basal diameter of seventeen feet. In 1822 lightning shattered its lofty shaft, but it has since been repaired, and is essentially the same as when it was first built. It reaches far above the treetops; for the apex of the conical roof by which it is crowned is ninety feet above the greensward at the foot of the column. A number of low windows occur at intervals all the way up, and at the very top are four, one looking toward each point of the compass. The only entrance is a door about ten feet from the ground, and as the wall below is perfectly blank I had no chance to get a glimpse inside.

Some jackdaws were fluttering around the summit and in and out the vacant loopholes, and I fancied they might have traditions of the uses of the old tower

more authentic than any which have come down to us in history; for no human being now knows surely what were the original aims of these curious constructions. Cut in the stone over the door is a cross enclosed in a circle, and at the top of the tower are the remains of a beam on which it seems likely a bell sometime swung. These things would indicate that the tower's later use, at least, was for Christian purposes. Indeed, the theory most generally accepted is that the round towers were religious in their use from the first. They date back nearly one thousand years, and have been in all cases in the immediate neighborhood of a church or monastery. Like other early church towers, it is assumed that they were symbols of dignity. That they served at the same time as watch towers and beacons, and were used as strongholds in times of danger, seems also probable. They could not be burned down like the timber churches and wattled cabins of the early days, and it is believed that during sudden raids they afforded places of security for the ecclesiastics and to some extent for the inhabitants of the country around. After the introduction of bells they are supposed to have been used as bell-towers to call students to school and the faithful to prayer.

There are more than one hundred round towers in Ireland, about twenty of them entire, or nearly so.

The latter are usually not far from eighty feet high, and as a rule are capped by a conical roof, and divided into stories. Immediately beneath the roof are four small windows, and a single narrow aperture affords light for each story below. Floors of masonry yet exist in some of the towers, though oftener the floors have been of wood, and long since fallen. Ladders were the means of communication from story to story. The door was nearly always at a considerable height above the ground, and here, too, a ladder was the only means of ascending and descending, and when this ladder was drawn up into the tower, the inmates were as snug and safe as they could desire.

Antrim was my last stop in Ireland of any consequence, and one evening I embarked at Larne to cross the Irish Sea. I watched the low green hills fade in the steamer's wake into indistinct gray, and then went below to escape the cold wind that swept the decks, and the salt spray that now and then came spattering across the planking from the plunging bow. The tour had been replete with varied experiences, and was of never-failing interest; and I carried away with me a most pleasing memory of warm-hearted Irish hospitality, while, in a sober way, the island's scenery had great charm in all its changes — from the placid, fertile south to the wild boglands and rude grandeur of the coast along the west and north. To be sure the Isle

of the Shamrock has its drawbacks, and it does not wholly win a stranger's affections, yet I cannot but wish that its future may realize all the brightness for which its scattered sons and daughters hope.

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